

A ROUSING STORY OF SCIENTIFIC BASKET BALL!

FRANK MANLEY'S GOOD STORIES WEEKLY OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906 by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

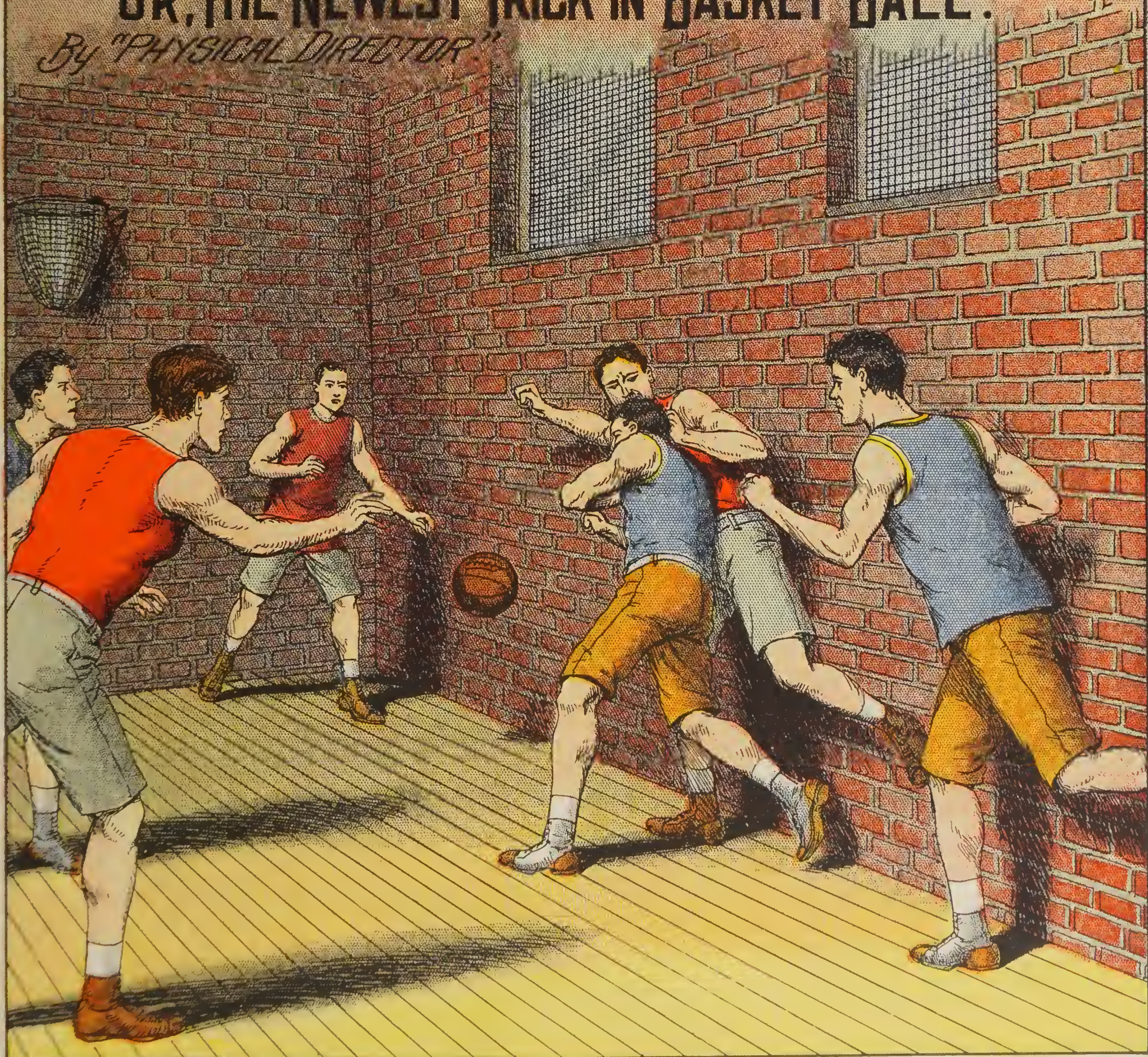
No. 18.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 5, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

FRANK MANLEY'S STOLEN GOAL ; OR, THE NEWEST TRICK IN BASKET BALL.

By "PHYSICAL DIRECTOR"



The wall was goal, Manley the ball, in that wicked maneuver. Leeson hurled Woodstock's captain against the wall with a sickening crash that roused the spectators to raging tumult!

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Handwritten text in Devanagari script, likely a subtitle or introductory line.

Main body of handwritten text in Devanagari script, appearing to be a list or a series of entries, possibly related to a historical or administrative record.

Frank Manley's Weekly

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FRANK MANLEY'S STOLEN GOAL;

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRAP OF DEATH.

"Well, say, what do you think of that?"

"The cheek of the fellow!"

"As bold as brass!"

"And looks sweet enough to be a saint!"

"Send for the police!"

"What do you say, Frank?"

"Why, if Gaston Duval sees fit to attend the academy, and Dr. Holbrook is willing to have him, I don't see what we can do to stop it," replied Frank Manley, slowly.

A group of excited youngsters stood outside of the Woodstock Academy, gazing at the school door that had just closed on the object of their remark.

"I thought he had left Woodstock for good," muttered Hal Spofford.

"Hoped he had, you mean," corrected Joe Prescott. "It's never worth while really to think about what Gaston Duval will do."

"I smell more trouble in the air," muttered Al Adams, the secretary of the Woodstock Junior Athletic Club.

"After all that he's done to Frank, even to trying to kill him!" uttered Lon Humphrey, disgustedly. "Joe, can't we

coax Duval somewhere and give him such a thumping that even his brass will melt and sweep him away from Woodstock forever?"

"I'd like the job well enough," muttered Joe. "But, Humph, we've got to take mighty good care not to put ourselves in the wrong."

Joe, second lieutenant of the club, and his understudy in boxing, Lon Humphrey, were known as the Biff Twins.

Any assignment to trouble in which a quick and heavy fist could play a prominent part was the kind of an assignment for which they yearned.

"It may be," hinted Hal, first lieutenant of the club, "that Duval has seen the uselessness of trying to do up Frank Manley in Woodstock. From the nod he gave us, as he went by, it would seem that perhaps he wants to bury the hatchet."

"Yes, in Manley's skull—that's where he'd bury it!" quivered Joe.

"What's the word, Frank?" hailed Foster, leader of the Trouble Trio, as he and Cranston and Lucas were called. "What shall we do with Duval? Anything you say the Trio will do, backed by the very able help of the Biff Twins, if you need 'em."

"That would be a case of five to one, wouldn't it?" smiled Frank.

"What if it is?" demanded Joe, quickly. "Duval didn't hesitate to hire a whole gang to exterminate you last week. Fortunately, we landed them all in jail-except Duval."

"And he was slick enough to keep any proof of the affair away from himself!" uttered Hal, angrily.

"He always will be slick enough," muttered Cranston. "That's Duval's kind."

"Until Some Day," Frank put in, with quiet emphasis. "Some day he'll go too far; and he'll make a mistake that will send him behind the bars."

"But he may have you crippled for life before that day comes," muttered Hal, uneasily.

"I'll be on my best guard," returned Frank, steadily.

Truth to tell, there was reason enough to be uneasy over the presence of Gaston Duval.

That young man belonged to one of the wealthy Creole families of New Orleans.

Gaston's father was dead, having left his son great wealth. The young man was now in the legal charge of his uncle, Claude Duval, a profligate old fellow, who spent most of his time in Paris.

Duval's bringing-up had been mainly in Europe, and of the worst kind that he could find under the care of his wild and wicked uncle.

Yet Gaston had been reared as an athlete.

He had failed in his entrance examinations at Yale, and so had decided to put in a winter of study at Dr. Holbrook's Academy.

His uncle held an overdue mortgage on the academy, and therefore held venerable and honest Dr. Holbrook very much in his hand.

Gaston could study as he pleased at Woodstock, yet, if Dr. Holbrook could be bullied into giving a certificate, Duval could enter Yale the following September without further examination.

On his first arrival at Woodstock, before the holidays, Manley had tried to make the young Creole welcome in Woodstock.

But Duval had taken a dislike to the captain of the Up and At 'Em Boys, and had tried to annoy Manley.

Failing in this, Duval had spent money freely in hiring others to help him in his self-imposed task of driving Manley out of Woodstock altogether.

Even these plots being frustrated, the Creole had made an attempt to have Manley killed, and in this he had been all but successful.

Several of Duval's paid thugs were caught and sent to jail, and Duval himself, not knowing how far the proof against himself went, had left Woodstock hurriedly.

But, from a distance, he had learned that there was no proof that would fasten a crime definitely on him.

And so here he was, on the first school day after the holidays, back in Woodstock and ready to be enrolled as a pupil at the academy.

Even now the young scoundrel was inside, talking with good but helpless old Dr. Holbrook.

No wonder the Up and At 'Em Boys were furious over

this latest sample of the grit and cheek of the young scoundrel!

But would Gaston Duval drop all further attempts against Frank Manley? That was the vital question that absorbed the youngsters.

Morning bell rang, calling the boys to the great study-room.

Duval was standing by Dr. Holbrook's desk as the Woodstock youngsters, with no very friendly looks at the Creole, filed to their seats.

"Young gentlemen," began Dr. Holbrook, gently and innocently, "I have the pleasure of presenting a new schoolmate to you, Mr. Gaston Duval, whom some of you may know."

Know him? Did they? The academy boys had difficulty in keeping themselves from hissing.

Duval walked to a desk not far from Manley's. The Creole smiled amiably at our hero before he turned to drop into his seat.

Classes were called and sent to the recitation-rooms. Those who did not recite at this hour bent themselves over their desks, deep in study.

That is, they appeared to be deep in study. As a matter of fact, study was impossible to most of them.

Even those who did not belong to the athletic club had an inkling of how things stood between Captain Manley and the new scholar.

Knowing this, the students could not restrain their tendency to stare covertly at Duval.

But the Creole, picking up a book, appeared to be ignorant of all the commotion that his coming had caused.

Manley, too, had picked up a book that he had brought to the academy that morning.

Ten minutes of study, and then Frank found that he wanted a book in his desk.

With his eyes still on his lesson, he thrust his right hand into the desk below.

Hiss-ss!

Soft as it was, the sound was blood-curdling. It gave Manley a chill, as he swiftly drew back his hand.

Then, sliding out of his seat, he swiftly leaped to his feet.

In the quiet schoolroom that commotion drew every eye instantly to the young athlete.

Even Duval looked slowly, curiously around.

Manley had stooped, now, so that he could look into his desk from a distance of a few feet.

"Jupiter!" he gasped.

Several boys sprang from their seats to hurry forward.

Dr. Holbrook looked up, mildly inquiring:

"What is wrong, Manley?"

"Wrong?" quivered our hero. "Oh, nothing, sir, except that some one has placed a live rattlesnake in my desk!"

"A rat——" gasped Dr. Holbrook, and could go no further. The idea staggered the good old man.

"Keep back, fellows," warned Manley, as the boys came crowding closer. "I don't want to see any of you get hurt."

There, in Frank's desk, was the rattler, fat and bloated,

as if it had been well-fed. It had coiled on top of a book, and there it hesitated, ready to strike at any one who came near.

"I think I can get it," said Manley, in a low, tense voice.

"Manley! Be careful!" cried Dr. Holbrook.

"Some one has to get that thing, sir," Manley shot back. "School can't go on with a thing like that at liberty in the room. Get back, fellows!"

As the more venturesome ones obeyed Frank's sharp order, our hero thought quickly.

Then, turning, he snatched up one of the pointers from its groove at the blackboard.

With the butt of this "teaser" Manley prodded at the reptile, all the time alert to give the snake no chance to spring at him.

True to its instinct, the rattler struck at the pointer.

Then, with a second spring, as Manley closed in, the reptile shot out its head, following with its body.

The slimy length fell at Manley's feet. The reptile started to coil for another spring.

There was but one thing to do, and that had to be done like lightning.

Bending over, Manley seized the tail of the hideous, deadly thing.

Swift as thought, our hero swung the snake aloft, then tried to hurl it against the wall.

In his hurry and excitement, his aim was bad.

The snake whizzed through the air, landing on the floor within four or five inches of one of the Creole's feet.

Not at all dazed by its fall, the slimy thing was once more coiling—and this time angrily and swiftly.

Duval did not see it in time. To a certainty he would have been bitten had not Frank Manley leaped forward, crying, intensely:

"Sit still, Duval! I'll get it!"

Swat! Down came the heavier end of the pointer, knocking the reptile's head slightly aside, just as it tried to strike.

Duval was out of his seat, now, at the other side, but Frank Manley had rushed in, striking another blow, and then jumping boldly in with his feet.

In a twinkling the rattler was past doing further harm, though it still quivered with some remaining life.

"Open the window!" called Frank, as he administered a few more grinding blows with his boot-heels.

Hal obeyed. Frank picked up the now harmless reptile by its tail and dropped it into the yard outside.

"Splendidly done!" cried Dr. Holbrook, his voice shaking with emotion. "Mr. Duval, you should shake hands with Manley for having saved your life so gallantly."

"I want to," cried Duval, advancing. He was smiling, though there was a glitter in his eyes that made Manley think again of the snake.

"You'll shake hands with me, won't you?" asked Gaston, extending his own hand.

"Will you at least put it off until recess?" asked Frank, quietly, as he turned and went back to make sure that there was not another reptile in his desk.

"Why, Manley!" exclaimed Dr. Holbrook.

Then the old principal remembered that there had been some kind of unpleasant feeling between the two young men, and he said no more.

But the commotion could not subside at once.

"It was too bad that you got in in time to keep the thing from biting Duval," whispered Joe, with eyes blazing queerly.

"It would have been a fearful thing to let the rattler get even Duval," Frank whispered back, looking steadily in Joe's eyes.

"But he put that thing in your desk," quivered Joe. "No one else would have done such a thing."

"I guess you're right enough," nodded Manley, slowly.

And that was the opinion of nearly every boy in the room.

By the time that order had been restored, and study had been resumed, Gaston Duval was a condemned and heartily hated young wretch.

CHAPTER II.

JUDAS WANTS TO SHAKE HANDS.

"Guess who's the leper here!" growled Hal.

"Pick out the fellow who can't find a single glad hand in the academy!" uttered Joe.

It was at recess, and all of the students were out in the yard.

As usual, the boys had gathered in little groups.

Gaston Duval was the only one who walked alone.

This he appeared not to mind. His nerve never failed him. He could face a crowd of people who hated him, without ever giving a sign of his annoyance.

But at last, from walking alone, he turned and strolled over toward Manley.

"Here comes his highness—the devil's only son and heir," muttered Joe, bitterly.

"If he comes up to me, fellows," requested Manley, "please leave us alone."

"There is something I want to ask you, Manley," began Duval, slowly, as he came near our hero.

Hal and Joe walked stiffly away.

"Well?" inquired Frank, without encouragement.

"Manley, what is wrong between us?"

"For information on that score," Frank answered, promptly, "apply to—yourself!"

Duval started, in apparent surprise.

"See here, Manley, if you're holding out against me that time when I tried to explode some powder in your cellar, you're keeping it up too long. I had been drinking that Christmas day, and I wasn't responsible."

"Aren't you rather young to drink?" asked Frank, coldly.

"Yes, of course; but I was so deucedly lonely that day that I acted like a fool. I never would have thought of anything of the sort if it hadn't been for the brandy. Can't we be something like friends?"

"Friends with the brandy and all?" Frank demanded, mockingly.

"I seldom drink. I shan't drink again."

"A splendid resolution," said Frank, coldly.

"Well, you haven't answered me, Manley. Are you going to hold out that foolish exploit against me?"

"How about the time when you had me struck senseless, and then fed me to the river through an air-hole?"

"I didn't do that!" flared Duval, with a pretense of indignation.

"There are those who saw you forcing something through the air-hole. And those same witnesses," went on Frank, "went in through the same air-hole and brought out my body just in time to save my life."

"I had nothing to do with that," denied Gaston, earnestly. "I don't care what mistaken onlookers think they saw. I didn't do it—I'll swear to that!"

"Perjury comes easy to some people," sneered Frank.

"I offered you my hand this morning," went on the Creole, persistently, "and you asked me to wait until recess. Will you give me your hand now?"

"Do you really want it, Duval?"

"Of course I do!" cried the young wretch, eagerly, and extending his own, quickly.

"For what purpose?" asked Manley.

The smile in the Creole's face died out.

"Frank Manley, are you trying to make a fool of me before all these fellows?"

"I must remind you that I didn't seek this talk."

"Then I am to understand that you refuse me your friendship?"

"On what ground could we meet as friends?" retorted Manley. "Do you think I give my friendship to every fellow who asks for it?"

Duval was silent for a few moments. But he did not once turn his gaze away from Manley's eyes. The Creole possessed so much assurance that few could long endure his gaze. But Manley met the look unflinchingly.

"Manley," went on Duval, at last, "I suppose I must have a peculiar nature. I am so built that, when I take any interest in a fellow, I've got to be either his friend or his enemy. Which shall it be between us?"

"That is a question that I can and will answer candidly, Duval. Any fellow who wants my friendship must show himself worthy of it. You and I could have been good friends from the start, but you chose otherwise. Now, after the things that you have done against me, and against others, you will have to prove that there is really some good in you before I care a rap about even the appearance of your friendliness."

"Then we are to be enemies?" queried the Creole, an ugly glint showing in his dark eyes.

Frank drew himself up, looking coldly, candidly into the other's watchful eyes.

"That, too, Duval, is as you wish. If you behave yourself, from now on, I'll judge by results. If you fight me—and do it openly, as a man would, I'll fight back without asking any quarter. If you try to do dirty, underhanded

things—well, you saw what happened to the rattlesnake this morning!"

Frank turned, as if to move away, but Duval interposed, softly:

"Remember, Manley, that I still want to be one of your friends, if you don't put the terms too high!"

"Then I have told you how you can accomplish it."

The ringing of the bell interrupted them. Manley turned to re-enter the building, but Duval, with the assurance of a favored pupil, remained outside.

After two or three minutes of thought, the Creole turned and walked out of the academy yard, strolling slowly, as if he still wanted to think.

His course took him to the river road beyond the town.

Out on this lonely thoroughfare he increased his pace, until he came to three tall oaks by the roadside.

Here he halted, looked all about him, then whistled.

"Here I am, Master Duval!" piped an elfish voice.

Most certainly there was something more than elfish in the appearance of the queer little mortal who answered him.

A male bit of humanity, not more than four feet two in height, yet with prodigiously broad shoulders and great depth of chest.

Up by the shoulder-blades a bit of a hump appeared.

The eyes of this specimen were black, yet sometimes, when they glowed, they looked more like bright red coals.

A wizened face. One could hardly guess whether it was that of a cunning, crafty boy of fourteen, or of a shrewdly wicked man past forty.

The nose was long and bent, more like a hawk's beak. The mouth was strong and cruel, the teeth large and discolored.

The hands at the long arms reached below the knees of this freak. Great, powerful hands they were, that looked as if built for strangling.

The clothing was careless and disordered. One would have guessed the freak to be suffering from acute poverty, had it not been for the appearance of a massive gold watch chain, and the presence on one finger of a costly, big seal ring.

As for the expression of this dwarf's face, it could be almost anything that its owner chose. Just now the look was one of eager cunning.

"At your orders, Master Duval!" leered this elfish dwarf.

"Come back into the woods, Guffle," ordered the Creole.

"I don't want any one to see me talking with you."

"Then follow me, Master Duval—though my eyes are so sharp and my scent so keen that I would detect any one else before he caught sight of us."

This extraordinary being, addressed as Guffle, turned into the woods, crunching the snow under his coarse shoes.

"And here we are safe," Guffle, after leading the way for fifty yards, announced. "Now, what is your will, Master Duval?"

"You have seen Frank Manley?"

"That I made my first duty on reaching town?"

"You are sure that you know him as the right one?"

"I have heard others call him Frank Manley, and he did not deny the name."

"That is well, then. Go after him."

"Have you any choice, Master Duval, as to what I do to this enemy of yours?" asked the dwarf.

"No; I leave that to your own cleverness, Guffle. Cripple him, drive him from town—destroy him, if you choose, but take him out of my life forever!"

"It is the same as done," declared Guffle, grinning.

"But be careful about one thing."

"And that, Master Duval?"

"Manley's sweetheart, Kitty Dunstan, is not to be harmed. Not a hair of her head. Mark that!"

"I understand," remarked Guffle, making a low, mocking bow. "The young lady is to be spared for you."

"Now, none of your cheeky remarks," retorted the Creole. "You have my orders. Obey them in your own way, but quickly. Just one more thing. Do not come near me again. I do not want to be known as your acquaintance."

"I always obey orders, Master Duval," protested Guffle.

"Then obey now by taking yourself away from here."

Turning, Guffle made off under the trees at a speed that was amazing in one of his height.

"Satan himself could not be a better ally than my extraordinary Guffle!" chuckled Duval, gazing after his servile but wickedly clever dwarf. "And now, I have but to lean back and wait for what will certainly happen."

Then the Creole retraced his steps—not to the academy, but back to the hotel, where he lived.

CHAPTER III.

GUFFLE WORKS AN EVIL SPELL.

In the afternoon, after school, some fast and furious hockey games on the ice—that was the way the Up and At 'Em Boys enjoyed the fine, keen winter weather after the holidays.

Just before Frank went home to supper he dropped in at his little store to see how business was moving.

As he entered the store he came under the cunning, evil gaze of the dwarf, though the latter was not visible to Manley.

"Close to the brink, you!" chuckled Guffle. "Though you do not realize it, the spell is beginning to work already."

Nor did the dwarf chuckle less to himself when Frank soon came out again to the sidewalk, hesitated there, turned as if to go to the postoffice, and then, instead, walked briskly to his home.

At the rear trailed Guffle, though so quietly and at such a distance that Manley did not even suspect his presence.

"Few can resist that spell," grimaced the dwarf, as he saw Manley go in through the front door of his home.

Then Guffle disappeared, to reappear in a cheap restaurant down in the mill boarding-house section.

Here, at table, the dwarf proved his eating capacity by stowing away a steak, a plate of bacon and eggs, vegetables and two big plates of pudding.

Clearly, it took a good deal to keep life in the dwarf's body.

And then, slipping into a saloon, he bought a pint bottle of whiskey, that he stowed away in one of his pockets.

Not that he intended, though, to send this stuff after the enormous supper that he had eaten. Guffle was altogether too shrewd a craftsman to use liquor when he had any task of importance on hand.

But by this time he knew that Manley would be through with supper, after which meal the young athlete was accustomed to take at least a short walk in the open air.

Surely enough, Frank did come out. Guffle noted that fact, though he was not anywhere in sight.

But, as our hero strolled off down the street, the dwarf glided noiselessly after him, soon overtaking him.

"Good evening, Master Manley!" quoth Guffle.

"Good evening, my friend. But, though you know me, I am afraid you have the advantage of me," replied Frank, looking down at his strange companion.

"Oh, I have seen you often, Master Manley," replied the dwarf. "Often during former stays in this town."

"Then it's odd that I don't remember you," Frank confessed, smilingly. "But I don't."

"Strolling, Master Manley?"

"Yes; I always try to, after supper."

"Is it a good habit—for the health, I mean?"

"Why, that's my reason for taking the walk," assented Frank.

"Then may I make bold, Master Manley, to walk with you for a little way, and get your views on walking?"

Guffle looked up, so childishly and eagerly anxious that Manley could not find it in his heart to refuse.

"I was thinking of going down to where the ice-cutting is going on," hinted Guffle.

"Why, that will be as good a place to walk as any other," Manley agreed. "And perhaps, while we walk, you will be willing to tell me something about yourself—for I cannot place you at all."

"That is because you have no need of me, Master Manley."

"No need of you?"

"But there are people who watch for me eagerly," rambled on the dwarf, in a sprightly fashion that made his talk interesting. "People not only wait for me anxiously, but they pay high for my services."

"And what may those services be?"

"Why," quoth Guffle, "I let gentlemen rub my hump."

"Why, what on earth do they want to do that for?" asked Frank, looking down once more.

"It brings luck."

"Luck?"

"To gamblers."

"Oh!"

Manley remembered to have heard that superstitious gamblers often attach great value to touching the hump of a hunchback who is reputed to be "lucky."

"But gambling is not a very proper business, is it?" Frank laughed.

"I don't gamble!" cried Guffe, looking up at his companion with such an oddly shocked air that Frank could not help laughing again.

"Yet you help men to luck in gambling," replied our hero.

"Oh, as to that," argued Guffe, "if men must gamble, is it not much better to help them to luck than to loss?"

"But you must be a good way from your usual haunts," suggested Frank. "There are no gambling places in Woodstock."

"I am on a vacation," retorted Guffe. "Even my profession is one that wears out body and nerves. Besides, if my hump were rubbed all the time, the luck would soon go out of it. So, just at present, I have brought some of the money that I have earned, and have left New York a long way behind for a while."

As they reached the river the dwarf had so contrived matters that he was doing most of the talking. But he was such a droll little talker that Frank was enjoying himself hugely.

Here the railway tracks were but a few yards from the river bank.

Guffe had stopped where the ice-cutting operations were at their height in the daytime.

"Tell me, Master Manley," he asked, pointing to a spur of track that ran up a rather steep hillside to the ice-houses on top, "why do these foolish men go to so much trouble to haul ice up the hill?"

"Why, you see," explained Frank, "the hill slope isn't so steep on the other side. The ice-houses are up there because land is much cheaper there than nearer the town. On the other side of the hill are two roads that lead to the ice-houses. In summer, from those ice-houses, not only Woodstock, but three or four other towns are supplied with ice."

"And how do they get cars up that steep track?" inquired the dwarf. "Surely they do not use locomotives?"

"They did, at first, but the slope made it a hard pull for an engine," Frank answered. "So now they use an endless chain under a slot. When the box-car containing the ice has been hauled up the slope to the ice-house, the car is still on a steep grade. But a lever is set that blocks the hind wheels of the car. When the car is empty the lever is turned again, the wheels are unblocked, and the car comes coasting down. The car is switched out on to that level spur you see over by the water, and the brakeman on top of the car sets the brakes and stops the car where the ice-loaders are waiting for it. You see, there is a car up on the hill, with the lever blocks set."

Guffe gazed, with a good deal of apparent interest.

"That car must come down fast," observed the dwarf.

"It would, if it were not for the brakeman."

"I suppose you have ridden on that car many a time?"

"Years ago I did," smiled Frank.

"Good evening, boys!"

It was a large, powerfully built man who spoke, as he approached them.

He was a stranger, Frank quickly noted. Nor was his

ugly face one of a kind that would fill an observer with confidence.

Yet he spoke as if he wished to be pleasant, so Manley returned the greeting pleasantly.

This man, who appeared to be past thirty years of age, was poorly dressed, and his overcoat decidedly frayed. He looked like a walking "hard-luck" story.

"Any chance for a job around here?" queried the stranger.

"Why, yes; a man of your muscle will have very little difficulty getting in with the ice cutters," replied Manley.

"Then I'm glad I came this way, for I'm tired enough of being out of work," went on the big fellow.

"Master Manley has been telling me much about the way they cut and store ice here," chimed in Guffe.

"Then I wish he'd do as much for me," suggested the man. "If I am to work here, it won't do me any harm to know the ropes."

Frank thereupon launched into a description of the Woodstock method of cutting ice and getting it up the hill. The stranger asked many questions.

While they were thus talking, Guffe espied a man with a lantern coming their way.

It was the switchman. He went straight to his switch, at the bottom of the ice-house spur of track.

Taking a key out of his pocket, the switchman unlocked the switch and reset it.

"Now the track's clear for the express," said the tender, gruffly but good-naturedly, as he caught sight of the dwarf watching operations.

"And how soon does the express go by?" Guffe wanted to know.

"In about ten minutes—and at a mile a minute, too. The express doesn't stop for forty miles beyond here."

"And now where do you go?" questioned the dwarf.

"Back to the town, and for something warm," laughed the switchman.

"If it is liquid warmth that you mean——" hesitated Guffe.

But he drew out the bottle of liquor and grimaced inside as he saw the quick light in the railroad man's eyes.

"Well, you are a great fellow, one after my own heart!" cried the switch-tender, as he reached for the bottle.

"Take a long drink; 'tis a cold night," quoth the dwarf.

Then, as the fellow's whole attention was centered on the bottle, Guffe adroitly slipped one hand into the pocket into which the switch key had dropped.

"Take your breath and try another little swallow," proposed the dwarf, good-naturedly.

This advice was accepted. The switchman would have stayed right with such pleasant company, but Guffe, stowing the bottle away again, walked off, leaving the switchman to return to town.

Frank and the stranger who wanted work were now up a little way on the hill slope, talking earnestly, and the stranger had so contrived matters that Manley's back was turned to the railway track.

Guffle watched during the minute or so that it took the switchman to get out of sight.

Then he darted at the switch, unlocked it so that the ice-house spur would run into the main track, then locked the switch and left the key in the padlock.

"The spell is working better than ever any did before!" chuckled the wicked little freak.

He waved one hand in the air. Up the hill-slope the powerful man saw the signal.

A moment later Guffle heard his confederate shout, angrily:

"You're a liar—a plumb liar!"

"Why, I don't understand you," Guffle heard the amazed Manley reply.

"Yes, you do, you liar!" roared the big fellow. "I'll pound your face in for that!"

He leaped at our hero, swaying a ponderous pair of fists. Nor was he any poor boxer.

Frank Manley discovered that in a second, as he strove to guard and defend himself.

Yet Manley was anything but a poor boxer, either. Despite the great advantage that the other had in point of strength and size, Frank kept his footing and struck back in lively fashion.

"Master Manley boxes too well for our good!" cried Guffle to himself.

That discovery started the dwarf swiftly up the hill.

"Hammer the fellow, Master Manley! Hammer him, and I'll help!"

Frank heard the dwarf coming behind him, and without a suspicion of treachery from Guffle.

The dwarf did, indeed, jump into the fight, yet he struck out so clumsily that the big fellow landed a kick on the freak that sent him to the ground.

"Oh, but I'll pay you back for that!" roared Guffle, getting slowly to his feet.

Yet he seemed wary about closing in again. He watched his chance, and, suddenly, as he saw Manley hard-pressed, slipped out a foot that adroitly tripped our hero.

Down went Frank, with the big fellow atop of him.

Three heavy blows in the face, and Manley, bleeding, was also unconscious.

"Two or three more taps to make sure," whispered Guffle.

The big fellow landed the extra blows with a vengeance born of his wrath that our hero should have put up so good a fight.

"And now for the rest!" cried Guffle, dancing about like a fury.

"I know!" nodded the dwarf's big ally.

"Quick, then, for there ain't a moment to spare, Master Bumpus."

"I'll be as quick as I can," grumbled Bumpus, bending over Manley.

"Up to the car with him!"

"I understand. But you come along, too!"

"Oh, I'll go!" chuckled the dwarf. "While you are the

muscle that does this neat work, I'll be the eyes that peer around to make sure that no one else looks on!"

There was something in the dwarf's elfish, gloating laughter that made even his big ally shiver.

Yet he picked unconscious Manley up in his arms and started up the slope with him.

Guffle followed close in the rear, chuckling:

"How the spell works! The best that ever I cast—and the easiest, too!"

"Guffle, you give me the creeps," growled the big man, as he hurried on and upward with his senseless burden.

"Then that will teach you never to fool with this poor, lucky hunchback!" cried Guffle, wickedly.

"No fear of that!" retorted Bumpus.

They were quickly at the open door of the box-car.

Panting, Gumpus laid Manley's unconscious form on the ground for a moment.

"He won't come to, you think?" asked the dwarf.

"He wouldn't for an hour—if nothing else happened," retorted Bumpus.

"Then up and look at the brake—with a great hurry, man!"

Bumpus climbed the car, swinging the brake fully loose.

"Now, into the car with the carrion that had the bad luck to offend Master Duval!" ordered Guffle.

Bumpus lifted his victim into the car, then jumped in and dragged Manley further inside.

"Now, out again!" quoth the dwarf.

As Bumpus's feet touched the ground he turned and rolled the door shut.

From almost a mile away sounded the shrill whistle of the through express—on time.

"Now, be quick with you!" screamed Guffle, himself leaping at the block lever.

Bumpus was at his side. Together they threw the lever over. The blocks swung aside from under the car wheels.

The sound came from the beginning of motion in the wheels over the frost-covered rails.

Now the car gathered in headway, and gained at every yard.

Swiftly down the spur it rolled, heading for the switch that should turn it on to the main track.

Behind came another shriek from the whistle of the flying express engine that, in twenty seconds more, would crash into the car and its human burden.

Twenty seconds—perhaps thirty—before fate came in the fearful crash that should wreck the car, and perhaps the express train as well!

Not more than a half minute more of life for Frank Manley!

CHAPTER IV.

GHOSTS AT WORK.

A gasp.

Then a choke.

The two sounds came from a pair of ghostly figures moving through the night.

Like a shot both started. They raced, sprinted, flew.

This pair had been running already for more than three miles.

Just as the car started they were nearing the crest of the hill.

Neither of the runners saw Guffle or Bumpus, who were making their best time down the other slope of the hill.

Nor did the fleeing scoundrels see the ghostly pair that shot into the night.

Nor did the ghostly pair head straight for the moving box-car that was carrying Frank Manley down to destruction.

Instead, they ran—hurled themselves through space at an angle that was intended to enable them to intercept the car on its downward flight.

From the foremost of the ghostly pair floated back the startled words:

"Right in the track of the express."

"Cost a hundred lives!" came the frantic answer.

"Hurry!"

"Don't miss!"

The foremost of the ghostly pair—he that looked like a slender-legged flying specter in the night, dropped one hand on a rung in the iron ladder at the back of the car.

For one dizzying instant it was a problem whether he would hold on.

Then, by a supreme effort he jerked himself toward the swiftly rolling car—yanked himself up on the ladder.

Nor did he pause an instant, now, but fairly rushed up that ladder, hurrying over the top of the car, along the narrow foot-board.

The second runner had harder work of it. He had not quite reached the car.

The burst of speed that he put on was heart-snapping.

But he caught the iron rung, held on with the strength of grim despair, then pulled himself up by the sheer strength that was in his biceps and wrists.

He, too, raced for the top of the car—went flying forward with the speed of the sprinter who will die sooner than lose the race.

The first boy was already at the brake at the forward end of the car.

Groaning, panting, he tried to swing the rusty, old-fashioned brake ring.

He had got it started, too, when the second boy was at his side.

"Good old Hal!" panted the second boy, as he hurled himself into the task for all that he was worth.

"All your strength and speed, Joe!" quivered Hal Spoford.

The brake turned slowly, at first.

Moisture had frozen in around the cogs.

It took all the sheer remaining strength of the young athletes to get that distant ice broken.

Then the brake yielded slowly, with creaking protest.

"Faster, Joe!"

"Got every pound of strength at work!"

"The express!"

Coming toward them they could hear the fearful rumbling of the train—then the shrill, warning whistle.

"Clear the track!" That was what the shrill toot meant, and right manfully were these two Up and At 'Em Boys buckling to their task.

Seconds meant everything, now.

Yet the brake yielded but a hair's breadth at a time—at a turn.

"Can we make it?" gasped Hal.

"If we can't, we'll go to—Jericho with 'em!"

"Now! Harder!"

But it was useless to exhort either to greater effort. Neither could have put in an ounce more of force than he was doing.

The box-car, under the clogging of its wheels by the reluctant brake, was slowing.

Yet there was still enough headway to more than carry the car onto the main track ahead of the express.

"It's useless!" quivered Hal, glancing at the short expanse of slope track ahead of them.

Toot! Too-oo-oot—hoot!

There came the express around the bend, hardly three hundred yards below the switch.

But the boys knew the presence of rather than saw the express, for their straining eyes were fixed on the brake that they were trying to control.

Slower and slower the box-car was going.

Yet it seemed impossible to stop it before it reached the main track.

"Don't jump!" quivered Hal.

"Never!" panted Joe.

Ah! The car was nearly stopped.

Yet, if it projected but an inch over the main track the express would hit it, smashing the car and hurling the long express from the track.

Now the locomotive light was so close that the tugging boys stood as if in the limelight.

Whiz! The engine had gone by. Would they smash into the cars behind?

But, for an instant, the force of the rushing engine seemed to drive the box-car back.

"Stop her!"

Hal gasped the order in despair, as he saw frightful death hardly a yard away.

But at last, on this slighter grade, the wheels of the box-car seemed blocked.

Were they?

Hal and Joe held to the brake, staring ahead in utter despair, awaiting dimly what a second or two should bring them.

Then the last car of the express went by.

No! The box-car's wheels were not wholly blocked, for the suction of the train drew it forward, now, onto the main track.

Safe! Hal, all his strength gone, felt near to fainting. He collapsed to his knees, holding feverishly to the brake ring.

And staunch old Joe, too, was on his knees, holding on likewise.

Neither boy was able to speak. The shock and the strain on their nerves were still too great and vivid.

But ahead, the train was slowing up.

Ever since the frightened engineer, by the aid of the great headlight's glow, had first caught sight of the moving car ahead, he had tried to slow down the train.

Then, seeing that he could not stop in time, and catching full sight of the work the boys were doing, he had let the train slide by, trusting to luck where human skill could not help.

Now, the train came to a stop, a few hundred yards ahead.

"There's the conductor running up to the engine to see what happened," panted Joe, as he caught sight of the lantern's light glancing along the track.

"I'd like to know what happened, myself," uttered Hal, in a faint, weak voice.

"We know what might have happened," returned Joe, drily.

Still, neither boy made a move to leave the brake.

As yet, neither felt that he had the strength.

Up the track, lanterns were coming toward them now.

Behind the lanterns were scores of startled, curious passengers.

They had felt the jarring bumping as the express passed by the switch, and now they had caught just enough from the hurrying conductor to know that something had been wrong—that was all.

"I'm going to try to get down, if I have to crawl for it," panted Joe. "I don't want to be caught, glued up here, looking like a fool."

If Prescott's voice shook, his arms and legs faltered more as he tried to crawl back along the footboard over which he had recently sprinted.

"Hey! What's up, there?" hailed the running conductor, as he swung the lantern.

"Me, for one thing!" grimaced Hal, faintly. "I'm going to try to come down."

He, too, turned and crawled slowly back along the footboard.

Joe was on the ladder now, going down. A trainman, seeing how weak the boy was, darted forward and aided him down.

Then came Hal. He, too, needed help.

"Now, what happened?" demanded the conductor, rather sternly, as the two boys stood leaning against the side of the box-car.

"The box-car got started down the ice-house spur," declared Hal.

"Who started it down?" demanded the conductor.

"I don't know," Hal answered.

"Eh? You don't know?"

"Maybe you think we did it for the fun of getting killed," growled Joe.

"What I want to know," insisted the conductor, "is who

started this car down the slope? If you don't answer me, somebody else'll make you."

"You're on the wrong track, Gordon," jumped in the engineer, who had just run up. "I saw those youngsters by the headlight's glow. Whoever started the car, I'll swear that they risked their lives as bravely as ever men did. They were trying to stop the car and save the express—even when they might have jumped to save themselves."

"Oh!—Then why didn't you say so?" demanded the conductor.

"Why on earth didn't you give us time to get our breath and strength enough to stand up alone?" retorted Joe.

"But how did this car start?" insisted the conductor.

"That's what we don't know," explained Hal. "We belong to an athletic club, and were out for a night run. We were just going up over that hill when we saw the car under headway. We heard the express whistling below, and knew what was likely to happen. We climbed up on the car, and went to work on the brake—that's all."

"And mighty bravely done," nodded the engineer. "I saw the best part of it, and it was mighty bravely done."

The passengers were crowding forward, now, to ask questions.

While Hal and Joe regained their breath as rapidly as they could, the engineer painted a stirring picture of heroism.

"I've sent ahead to the depot to notify and to get telegraphic orders," grunted the conductor. "We must pull on lively, for we've lost a good many minutes."

Now, the station agent came down on the run, followed at a little distance by more people.

"Better pull out up to the depot, conductor," hinted the agent. "The operator 'll soon have your train orders. I've sent for the police. How does this thing seem to have happened?"

The agent listened, while several people in the throng tried to talk all at once.

"Funny that door is shut," grunted the depot agent. "I never knew the ice people to do that."

Curiously, he threw the sliding door back. Then he held up his lantern and looked in.

"Whew!" was his ejaculation of astonishment, and that brought a score of people crowding around.

Then three or four gently lifted out the form of Frank.

"Manley!" cried Hal, leaping forward. "He was in there?"

Frank was just returning to consciousness. His eyes were open, but he was still too dazed to think clearly.

"This is some prison-bird's work!" quivered Joe.

Then his eyes met Hal's. Together they spoke the same word:

"Duval!"

The conductor, with a swift summons, was hurrying forward on the heels of the engineer. Reluctantly the passengers followed.

Now a sleigh came swiftly up. Chief Griscomb and a policeman jumped out.

Hal and Joe were busy trying to revive Frank, whom they had seated in the open doorway of the car.

Griscomb was asking rapid questions, when a misshapen dwarf pushed his way into the crowd.

"Master Manley!" cried Guffle. "How fortunate! Oh, what a fright I've had!"

"Then you'll stay with me, fellow," uttered Chief Griscomb, turning and pouncing on the dwarf. "What do you know about this?"

"Very little, and everything!" cried the dwarf, shrilly. "I was taking a walk with Master Manley, when a big man joined us. There was a dispute, and Master Manley and the big fellow fought. I tried to help Master Manley, but the big fellow was too much for us. First he knocked Master Manley down, and then he chased me. How I ran—and I got away from him."

"Do you hear that, Frank?" whispered Hal. "Was the hunchback friend or foe?"

"Is that Guffle?" asked Frank, weakly.

"Yes," roared Griscomb. "Did he fight for you or against you, Manley?"

For a moment Frank seemed trying hard to think. Then he answered:

"Guffle's all right. He was a trump!"

Chief Griscomb let go his hold on the dwarf's collar.

Then Guffle talked volubly, even to giving a very good description of Bumpus—whom he had just started on his way to escape.

Frank nodded assent to the hunchback's discovery.

Some one who had gone up the hill discovered the block lever to be thrown off.

"I think I understand," nodded Chief Griscomb, grimly. "I'll try my best to make it warm for some one to-night!"

Frank was hastily helped into the chief's sleigh, and taken to his home, Hal and Joe following on foot.

Then the news got out, and Woodstock settled down to a grim man-hunt.

CHAPTER V.

THE BIFF TWINS GET IN IT.

"Now, to renew my acquaintance with Master Manley!"

So mused Guffle, as he sat on the edge of the little dock down below the gym of the Woodstock Junior Athletic Club.

The hunchback was fastening on a pair of skates. Out on the ice many of the townspeople were skating. The Up and At 'Em Boys were up above the bend, on that portion of the ice that common consent generally reserved for their practice.

All alone was Guffle until Gaston Duval came sauntering along with a pair of skates on his arm.

There was no recognition between the pair, but as Duval bent over to put on his own skates he growled, in an undertone:

"A nice mess you made of it!"

"Now, how could I help it?" shot back the dwarf. "I did my best."

"One more such best will land you in jail!"

"Does Master Duval wish me to stop in my plans?" asked the hunchback, grinly.

"No, confound you! You've got to carry the thing through!"

"Now, that is the way to talk, for this time I shall not fail."

No more did Guffle say. He rose and skated away. Though he moved clumsily on runners, the hunchback got over the ice with considerable speed.

Up the river he was just in time to watch the closing game of a series played between two teams of the Up and At 'Em Boys.

Frank, with a black eye painted out, did not look much the worse for the last night's encounter.

None paid much attention to Guffle, but just as the match broke up Joe started to skate away, then stopped to mutter disgustedly to Manley:

"The cheek of Duval! Here he comes, now."

"Well, the river is free to all who choose to use it," grimaced Frank.

"You wouldn't think he'd hunger for our company," muttered Hal. "It's in line with the way he acted at the academy. He knew that every fellow at the academy suspected him of being at the bottom of last night's fearful business, yet he walked in just as if he owned the place, and as if he regarded us as not being important enough to notice."

"Well, we didn't pine any for his notice," smiled Frank.

"What do you think of that chap, Guffle, over there?" asked Joe, suddenly.

"Queer little chap, but all right, in his way," pronounced Manley.

"I've been wondering if he had any hand in last night's doings?" pursued Joe.

"Only what he told us freely enough," Frank replied. "I can testify that he tried to help me in my fight."

"Somehow," grumbled Joe, "I can't work up much faith in Guffle."

"He's not one of my friends," laughed Frank. "We merely happened to meet on a stroll last night."

"I hope you won't meet him on many more strolls," muttered Hal.

"Probably I shan't. And now I'm off for fifteen minutes of fast skating. Coming along?"

For some minutes Hal and Joe kept close to their leader. But at last the boys separated.

Frank skated, finally, over by a strip of woods along the river shore.

"It's getting dark," thought Frank. "I'll soon call the fellows together for a fast squad skate down to town."

As Manley stood there, he suddenly became conscious of the presence of Guffle, back there in the woods.

"And now, good evening, Master Manley," hailed the hunchback. "You look warm."

"I've been skating hard."

"Perhaps you are thirsty, too. I was, so I went back

in the woods, broke some thin ice over a spring and got a good drink."

"That sounds good," smiled Frank.

"If you are thirsty," suggested Guffe, drawing a bottle from one of his pockets, "take a drink. I filled this bottle up, the water was so good."

Manley was on the point of declining, but something in the misshapen dwarf's manner impelled him to take the bottle.

Guffe had felt certain that Frank would. For many years this strange freak had cultivated the art of controlling other people's minds so that they would act on simple suggestions of his.

"Why, I've half emptied your bottle," smiled Manley, as he passed it back.

"And right welcome you are, Master Manley. And now I shall put my skates on again and get myself down the river. Want to rub my hump for luck?"

Frank laughingly declined. He watched Guffe skim down the river and disappear in the darkness.

Frank was about to blow his whistle when he heard a step behind him. A slightly built, frightened-looking young man was coming softly through the snow.

"If this is Frank Manley," began the stranger, "I'd like just a few words with you. I'm in trouble, and you can help me, I think."

"I shall be glad if I can," Frank answered, pleasantly. "What's the trouble?"

The young man launched into a long-winded yarn of lost employment, and his futile efforts to get a new position.

Frank thought, for an instant, of the work-hunting stranger of the night before. Then he looked at this slight-looking chap and smiled at the absurdity of his suspicion.

"I don't see how I can help you," said Frank, at last.

"But you haven't heard all of the story yet."

"I must call the fellows in here," replied Manley, drawing out his whistle.

"For heaven's sake give me just two minutes more," begged the fellow, so piteously that Frank put the whistle down from his lips.

Then once more the fellow launched into his seemingly unending story.

But now the voice seemed coming from a distance. Frank felt unaccountably drowsy—so drowsy, in fact, that he did not even wonder at his condition.

Then he found himself falling, but did not even make an effort to save himself. Then all was dark.

"Here!" called the stranger, in a quick, low tone.

Out of the darkness sprang two other men.

They hurried forward, picked up the now unconscious, drugged athlete and quickly disappeared with him in the darkness.

Click! click! Skaters were swiftly approaching the shore.

"Where are you, Frank?" called Joe.

Of course there was no answer.

"Hasn't gotten along yet, Lon," remarked Joe.

"Gone away, you mean," returned Humphrey. "I saw him standing here just before it grew dark."

"Somebody has been sitting here," muttered Joe, noting the depression in the snow at the edge of the ice.

"Some one has been lying there," returned Humphrey, bending over to look.

"Funny place to lie. And, see here—there have been a few people here. See all these footprints in the snow."

Joe had his pocket flash-lamp out, turning on the current and sweeping the light around.

"Some of these footprints are so far apart that whoever made them ran!" muttered Joe, excitedly.

"Listen!" commanded Humphrey, holding up one hand.

Over on the road they heard the sudden start of some vehicle on runners. The jingling of the bells showed that horses were travelling at great speed.

"And this was where you saw Manley?" questioned Joe, sharply. "Look here, Lon! There's been trouble. Any bad sign gives me the creeps these days. What if Duval—Lon, it's a swift run for us after that sleigh!"

Joe made his start on the instant that he had wrenched off his skates. Nor did Humphrey get in motion much behind him.

"I thought I heard some one calling for me," announced a soft voice in the darkness.

Three men walking briskly through the woods toward the ice now stood in Joe's path.

"Duval!" steamed Joe, halted by the trio, who stood blocking his way. "I thought so!"

"I want you, Prescott!" cried the Creole, tossing aside his coat in a jiffy. "You have insulted me often enough lately. Now we'll settle!"

"No, no—not now!" blazed Joe. He made an effort to get by, but one of the Creole's companions pushed him back.

They were tough-looking fellows, these companions of Duval's, though they were rather well dressed.

"You can't get by until you've fought me for it!" grated Gaston Duval.

"Then Frank is in danger!" shouted Joe. "Close in with me, Lon! Kick, bite, scratch—anything!—but get by them!"

The trio closed in as the Biff Twins, grimly, desperately in earnest, and with all their fighting blood up, rushed the assault.

CHAPTER VI.

A HURRY CALL FOR THE TROUBLE TRIO.

"I'll attend to you myself!" quivered Joe, as he lunged his hardest at the Creole.

But Duval, with a sneer, ducked and came back with a right-hand blow that grazed Prescott's temple.

That taught Joe his lesson at the beginning of the fight. He must keep cool or he would lose more than his fight.

One of Duval's companions sprang forward to assist the Creole.

"Go for that other chap, first—both of you!" snapped Gaston.

So, though Humphrey kept his feet, and fought with all

the power in his strong young muscles, he found himself being forced back to the river.

Joe had already received a staggerer that had nearly broken his nose, and, though his contest with Duval lasted the better part of a precious minute, Joe realized that he was getting slightly the worst of it.

On the inspiration of the moment Joe did what he had never done in fair fight. He turned suddenly and ran.

Duval stood gasping with surprise for an instant, then started slowly after him.

But Prescott had gained the advantage for which he had been looking.

Out came his whistle. Rapidly, loudly, tremulously, he blew the hurry call of the Up and At 'Em Boys.

That appeal could be heard for half a mile on the frosty air.

Shouts from the ice quickly answered.

"Now you'll get all you want!" quivered Joe, as he turned to face Duval.

Apparently the Creole thought the same, as he heard the clicks of skates out on the ice.

"Save yourselves, fellows!" shouted the Creole.

Turning from Joe, he darted to where his coat lay, snatched it on the run and vanished in the darkness.

For a moment Joe did not know what to make of this sudden turn, and Duval was away in the darkness of the woods.

His two companions, too, had turned and run.

"Never mind 'em, Lon!" called Prescott to his twin in boxing. "It's Manley that we're after."

"What's the row in there?" hailed Dick Foster, as he headed swiftly for shore.

"Come in like lightning," bellowed Joe, "and get your skates off!"

Up came the reinforcements—Foster, Cranston, Lucas and Al Adams, the first three being Woodstock's famous Trouble Trio.

"Manley—something's happened to him—sleigh gone off to northward!" palpitated Joe. "Adams, stay to direct the rest. You others, come on!"

Throwing his pocket-flash down on the snow, Joe darted off at as nearly sprinting speed as he could make.

The trail led to the road, with its beaten hoof and sleigh track, and there it ended.

"It's follow the sleigh, now," breathed Joe. "We know it went to the northward. Watch the sides of the road, fellows, for more prints where these fellows may stop and take to the woods. And travel like lightning!"

It needed one with Joe's swiftness of thought and motion to lead a chase like this.

But the sleigh had had a good five minutes' start. Behind two fleet horses, driven at their best speed, the sleigh was likely to distance human runners over that slippery track.

The sleigh was a pung, containing the three men who had borne Manley from the woods. In the bottom of the pung, under blankets, lay the unconscious young athlete.

"This is tough, risky work," muttered the driver, to his

companion. "Without the big money we're promised, Master Guffle would never catch me here."

"But Guffle always pays what he promises," rejoined the other ruffian.

The slim young man who had delayed Manley until the drug did its work had nothing to say. He was sitting on top of the pile of blankets.

Swiftly they drove for some three miles, taking a road that led them further into the country away from the river.

"This section ought to do as well as any other," spoke the driver at last. "The place doesn't make much difference."

He drew rein on the steaming horses.

"Now, let's get this ghastly business over with as quickly as possible," he muttered. "It's the worst I've ever done, and I've no relish for it."

"But the thousand apiece in cash!" broke in the slim young man, with a ghastly grin.

"Shut up, and bring the rope along!"

The two larger men lifted the unconscious young athlete from the pung, carrying him into the woods for perhaps two hundred feet.

At their heels came the slim one.

"That tree's as good as any other," nodded the man who had driven.

With the agility of a monkey, the slim young man climbed a sturdy oak.

To one of its lower branches he made the rope fast. From its lower end dangled a noose.

"Now, wait until I get the box!" called the human monkey, landing lightly in the snow.

He ran to the pung, returning with a dry-goods box.

On this the two larger men stood Manley's limp figure, propping him there in standing position.

"Throw the noose around his neck—so!" breathed the human monkey. "Now, away with the box!"

The support wrenched from under his feet, Manley's senseless body swung in the air—lynched by order of Gaston Duval!

"Now, pick up the box and scoot!" shivered the human monkey, who had taken command in this grisly business.

As they ran, they hurled the box over behind a thicket.

Then out to the road they fled, not daring to look back at that silent, dreadful, accusing specter under the oak.

Into the sleigh they tumbled, while the driver snatched up the reins in his shaking hands.

"Drive fast!" faltered the human monkey. "I think I hear sleighbells behind."

Off into the night they rushed—afraid to look back—even afraid to think.

Now, down the road behind them sped a noble pair of seal-brown horses, drawing a single cutter.

In the cutter were a middle-aged man and a girl of perhaps seventeen.

"Did you see those men run out of the woods ahead, papa?" asked the girl, curiously.

"I did not, child. Your eyes must be better than mine on this dark road."

"Three men ran out of the woods, just ahead, as if something or somebody were behind them. They have jumped into their pangs and are traveling twice as fast as we are."

The man did not reply. Apparently he thought the incident worthy of but little notice.

But the girl's restraining hand was on the reins now, slowing the speed of the splendid animals.

"Why, child, what do you expect to find? Bear tracks?"

"I'm just curious, papa."

To please her whim the man brought the horses to a halt.

"See," went on the girl, "there are the men's tracks."

"What are we to do with the tracks? Take them home with us?"

"Papa, suppose some crime has been committed in these woods?"

"Ugh! That's pleasant!" grimaced her companion.

"Won't you please go in the woods, a little way?"

"You're getting morbid, child!"

"No; but, really, I have a presentiment that all is not right here. Please do go!"

Grumbling a bit, the man passed the reins over to his daughter, fumbled in a pocket for his revolver, then got out and trudged steadily into the woods, following the tracks.

Then, an instant later, came the blood-curdling appeal:

"Child, come like a flash—for a life, perhaps!"

Nor did the girl need any urging. She sped into the woods, to find her father holding up by the legs a body at the end of a rope.

"It's Frank Manley!" quivered the man. "No, don't faint—act!"

She raced to his side, just as her father gently let the hanging body fall taut again.

Then a knife flashed in the man's hands as he pressed it into his daughter's grasp.

"No weak heart!" he cried. "Up, Kit Dunstan, and cut that rope, like lightning!"

He caught her in his arms, lifting her.

Kitty Dunstan hacked at the taut rope with the energy of despair.

Chug! The senseless body, cut down, dropped limply in the snow.

John Dunstan tore away the now loose noose.

"Frank, Frank!" cried the pallid, tottering girl, throwing herself down beside him, and raised his head. "Can you speak?"

"Not likely!" said her father, quickly, grimly. "Pay close heed and help me. We must start artificial breathing!"

Shaking off the trance of horror that threatened to overwhelm her, Kitty Dunstan obeyed her father's every order.

In three minutes Manley was breathing a little on his own account, though he was still unconscious, and his pulse barely fluttering.

Two minutes more they worked over him. Then John Dunstan stood up, holding Kitty's sweetheart in his arms.

"We've done all we can here, child. Now, Gresham is

the nearest doctor. While I look after Manley you drive like mad!"

Not a bit of urging did Kitty need. Before the reins were fairly in her grasp she brought down the whip with a smartness that made the animals leap away.

Two miles below they met the Biff Twins and the Trouble Trio jogging alertly up the road.

"We have Manley—rushing for Dr. Gresham's!" was Mr. Dunstan's message that floated back on the air to them as the seal-browns dashed onward.

By all the good luck in the world, Dr. Gresham was at home. He had Frank, still alive, carried to a bedroom, where he and Mr. Dunstan undressed the young athlete and put him to bed.

And now, Kitty, inactive at last, and with only the physician's wife to keep her mind unoccupied, seemed divided between fainting and going into hysterics. For never had the girl had such a fearful shock as this before.

"You must try to keep me from being silly," begged Kit, tears in her eyes.

It was a great relief to her when Joe and his untiring little squad arrived. Joe could go into the room where Manley lay, and soon he came out with the most cheering news that he could honestly bring.

Later that night Manley was moved to his own home, being carried there on a cot in a covered wagon.

Mrs. Manley, calm and clear-headed, even in this awful crisis, found great comfort, nevertheless, in Kitty, who insisted on remaining for the night with Frank's mother.

For extra service Mrs. Manley could have had the entire Woodstock Junior Athletic Club.

Hal, Jack Winston and Lon Humphrey did remain. Joe was in and out. He had plans in his mind that he and Hal had talked over.

Two more physicians were called in, but through the night the reports were not of the best.

From the strangulation caused by his short hanging, the young athlete might have rallied readily.

But, in addition, the doctors found themselves combating the effects of some powerful drug that, in itself, would quickly have proved fatal to any one of less athletic constitution than Frank Manley's.

At a rather late hour that evening Mr. Dunstan got out of one of his carriages at the gate of Thomas Jackson, newly rich and the richest man in Woodstock.

Inside, Mr. Dunstan found Joe Prescott, though not, as usual, calling on Miss Fannie. Instead, the young man was talking earnestly with her father.

"Jackson," began John Dunstan, briskly, "I have come, feeling that it is high time for us to have something to say to each other."

"If you mean about the subject that Joe and I have been discussing, I am more than usually glad to see you," replied Mr. Jackson, as he took his caller's hand.

"Then, perhaps, you are as worked up over this matter as I am?"

"If there is any course of action I can join you in,"

"Well listen as long as you choose to talk."

"It is action that is needed, rather more than talk," retorted Mr. Dunstan, grimly. "No, Joe, you needn't go," as Prescott moved toward the doorway. "You will be interested in what we have to say, and there isn't a closer-mouthed boy in Woodstock. Now, then, Mr. Jackson, two fearful crimes have been attempted in the town within twenty-four hours. A state of things has come about in Woodstock that can't be endured any longer. It isn't especially with Manley that I concern myself, but the fact that Woodstock is becoming a town of horrors."

"And all on account of this cold-blooded, conscienceless fellow, Duval!" cried Mr. Jackson, with deep feeling.

"We don't know that Duval is at the bottom of it," observed Mr. Dunstan, drily. "We only suspect it, from what we have heard. We must go upon facts if we hope to succeed. Jackson, I have come to suggest that you and I combine to secure some facts."

"How do you mean?"

"If you'll join me, we'll hire detectives to go to the very bottom of this matter. I pledge myself to spend five thousand dollars, if necessary, if you will do the same. We must make this town an unsafe place for desperate criminals."

"I'll gladly join you, and for any amount," promised Mr. Jackson, eagerly.

There was fighting blood in John Dunstan's veins, though in the usual sense of the word he was no more of a fighter than he was an athlete.

But now there was a grim, conquering smile on his face as he announced:

"Within twenty-four hours, whether Manley lives or dies, things will happen in Woodstock!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIGHT BRAND!

"How is Frank this morning?"

The question was put almost in a whisper by one of nearly a score of boys who had gathered just outside of Manley's front gate that morning.

All through the night the young athlete had been the object of the most anxious care, and now Hal, who had spent the night at the house, came out to bring the news to the silently waiting Up and At 'Em Boys.

"Frank is conscious, and knows what is going on around him. But he either keeps silent, or lies in a doze. He acts as if he didn't take any interest in life," was Hal's sorrowful message.

"Will he get well?"

"Will he ever be any good again?"

"Oh, he'll be up and around again, before long," choked Hal, "but whether his days as an athlete are over is something the doctors don't like to say."

"If he's badly hurt, then we'll carry bad luck to that demon, Gaston Duval, on an axe!" growled Mike McGuire in an ugly voice.

"We'll tar and feather him," predicted Humphrey. "That'll be the least."

"We ought to do it, anyway!" uttered another boy, between his teeth.

"Do it now—to-day!"

The proposition seemed to meet with some approval from the murmurs that ran through the little, inflamed group.

"None of that talk, please, fellows!" begged Hal, earnestly. "If you really want to please Frank, you won't think of anything of the sort. You know that he's the last one to favor anything underhanded, or any lawbreaking."

Hal longed to tell them of the steps that Mr. Dunstan and Mr. Jackson had taken for the purpose of putting an end to Duval's series of wicked games. But Hal, himself, knew this only as a secret that was not to be passed along.

Later in the morning Manley insisted on being helped to dress. The doctor interposed, but Frank was firm. He was dressed and helped to a chair. With an overcoat on he sat close to an open window much of the time, drawing in great breaths of cold, pure air.

Yet it was not long ere he tired, and had to be helped to a sofa, as he refused to go to bed again.

Gaston Duval appeared as usual at the academy. He looked over the heads of the indignant boys, and seemed unaware of their indignant looks.

With Frank, Hal and Joe away from the academy, it was difficult to keep the youngsters from violence toward their unpopular fellow-student.

But Jackets Winston, young as he was, was a leader in the club, and he managed, at last, to get the angrier and more turbulent spirits somewhat under control.

By Wednesday night Frank seemed much stronger and brighter. He talked quite a bit, though he avoided all reference to Duval.

Thursday Frank surprised everybody—the doctors most of all—by going out of doors early in the afternoon.

He had his own ideas as to the way to get strong after an injury or an illness. Open air and light gymnastic work, plenty of sleep, was his own prescription for himself.

Friday morning Frank was out on the ice, skating easily, though Hal and Kitty Dunstan insisted on going with him.

Friday afternoon there was furore at the academy, for Manley appeared and took his seat as usual.

He was just a trifle pale—that was all the sign he showed of his recent mishaps.

After school was over, Hal, Joe and Jackets strolled with Manley down to his little store.

"The basket-ball game with Bradford comes off to-night, just the same," explained Hal, who had taken temporary command of the club. "We couldn't postpone, so many tickets have been sold."

"Why, I hadn't thought of wanting the game postponed," Frank declared, quickly.

"We shall miss you awfully from the game," Hal went on. "McGuire will substitute for you."

"He's a good man, if he's needed," Frank assented, quietly.

Hal stopped short, looking at his chum, gaspingly.

"Why, Great Dewey, you haven't any thought of playing to-night, have you?"

"Haven't had any other thought all along," Frank declared, coolly.

"But, good gracious, old man, you're in no shape to play!"

"We'll go down to the gym presently, and see," smiled Manley. "I won't play against the wishes of my friends."

"And the Evening Sentinel announces that McGuire is going to play in your place," observed Joe.

"Then don't say too much until we see whether I can play," suggested our hero.

Frank stepped inside of the store for a few moments. Jackets followed, to look at a magazine, while Hal and Joe waited outside.

"Here comes his nibs from the infernal regions," muttered Joe, disgustedly.

Hal turned slowly, his gaze lighting on Gaston Duval, who was strolling up Main Street from the hotel.

The Creole wore on his head a jaunty sealskin cap. The overcoat that he wore was one of his most elegant black broadcloth affairs.

From one arm hung his silver-plated, gold-mounted skates.

"He must expect to win some girl's smile," growled Joe, under his breath.

Hal and Joe were standing on the curb. Duval paused as he found himself in front of Frank's store. He looked the two youngsters full in the face, bowing slightly.

"I haven't had an opportunity, yet, to tell Manley how much I regretted hearing of his mishap," said the Creole, in his softest voice.

"I reckon the message will keep," retorted Joe, drily.

"But isn't Manley outdoors and at school a little too soon?" went on Duval.

"That's mostly his own affair," retorted Hal, coldly.

"I do not quite understand Manley's attitude, nor yours," insisted Duval, his color rising slightly.

Hal was about to nudge Joe and turn away. But just then Spofford's gaze fell on Jackets, who, stepping softly out of the store with something in his hands, was signalling to the club's first lieutenant.

Then, like a flash, it crept through Hal's mind what Jackets meant to do. So Hal stood his ground, intent on keeping Duval's attention for a few moments.

"Do you mean our attitude towards you?" Hal asked, coldly.

"Exactly."

"Then, to put it mildly," retorted Spofford, "our attitude is based on failure to find in you anything that we can like."

"Have I ever asked you to like me?" demanded the Creole, with one of his odd, sinister smiles.

"You have asked why we treat you as we do," broke in

Joe. "It is because we don't want anything to do with you, and are trying to show it plainly."

Hal would have cut it short at that point, but Jackets, behind Duval's back, was still working as busily as a beaver.

So Spofford chipped in:

"You must remember, Duval, that it was you who started to be unpleasant. We have sized you up, and you mustn't wonder at the result of that sizing."

With a grin from behind the Creole's back, Jackets signified that he had done. Then, with ink pot and marking brush, little Winston turned and made into the store.

Hal nudged Joe. Turning squarely on their heels, they walked down the street, leaving Duval alone.

Flushing a little more, the Creole stepped away.

Then, for the life of them, Hal and Joe could not resist the temptation to turn and look at the back of Duval's black coat.

There, in great white letters, Jackets Winston had lettered, crudely, the one word:

"Cur!"

"That's the right brand, for once," choked Joe, as he looked into Hal's laughing eyes. "Bully for Jackets! I'll buy him a stick of candy for that!"

Duval was conscious of a good many amused looks as he made his way to the river.

Out on the ice he attracted laughter, jeers and catcalls; but none told him the cause of the hubbub.

It was much the same when he got further up the ice and went by the Up and At 'Em Boys at their practice.

Mad all the way through, Duval left them behind, and skated to Bradford.

Here, too, his appearance created an excitement that brought the hot flush of anger to his cheeks.

Not a few read the word, "Cur," and the Creole quivered with rage.

"There's no pleasure being on the ice to-day," he stormed, within himself. "Has that fellow, Manley, turned two towns wholly against me?"

He went through the Woodstock crowd like a streak on his return.

But not until he had returned to the hotel, and had hung up the coat in his room, did his eyes light on the brand placed there by Jackets.

"Some one shall pay dearly enough for that," he quivered, tears of rage standing in his eyes as he looked at the work of the joyous young vandal.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOODOO AT THE BASKET-BALL GAME.

"You can't come in here!" uttered Hal, sternly.

He was standing at the outer entrance to the gymnasium, watching the work of the amateur ticket-takers while the crowd came along to see the basket-ball game between Woodstock and Bradford.

And now Hal, with wrath blazing in his eyes, stood directly before Gaston Duval.

That cool young wretch, pretending to look amazed, was holding out a ticket.

"You can't stop me from going in," protested the Creole.

"I can and will," flared Hal. "You can have your money back—that's all."

"On what ground do you refuse me admittance?" insisted Gaston.

"You're an objectionable character; we don't admit such," retorted Hal.

"Don't block up the way," called Joe, behind Hal's back. "Let the people in."

But apparently the people didn't want to go in just then. Nearly every one in Woodstock knew Duval by sight. Now, the throng crowded around, glad of this little excitement.

For a few seconds Duval hesitated, looking as if he would fight. Then, without a word, he thrust the ticket back in his pocket and hurried away.

"Don't let that fellow in, if he comes back later," was Hal's order to the ticket-takers. "If he makes any row, send in word for some of the fellows."

But Duval got in, just the same. Twenty minutes later, wearing a different hat and overcoat, and disguised under a red wig and goggles, he presented his ticket and entered the gym without challenge.

All the spectators were up on the gallery running track. Here the track had been covered by sections of boards, and seats for four hundred had been provided.

The seats were filling rapidly, too, for there was a very fair attendance from Bradford.

It was the first time that the two famous junior clubs had met at basket-ball, and there was much curiosity as to how the score would run.

Back in the locker-room the players of both clubs were getting into their togs.

"But surely, Frank, you're not going to try to play?" protested Tod Owen, captain of the Bradfords.

"I don't know why not," smiled Manley.

"But after that fearful knockout——"

"I left it to my friends. They saw my exercise bout before supper. I believe they're satisfied that I'm in fair condition."

"Frank's all right," nodded Hal, "if we have a game under right conditions. If it's a game of brains, instead of beef, Frank is in condition enough to go through the game."

"I hope you don't think we'd put up a rough-house game," cried Tod, his face flushing.

"Not for a minute," declared Hal, promptly. "And with a gentleman's game, and all slugging left out, Frank will play the two halves O. K."

"It's wonderful," murmured Tod, "how Manley has pulled himself together so soon."

"Oh, he wouldn't take the doctor's pills, gruel and sleep," laughed Hal. "He just got up out of bed and showed how an athlete should pull himself together."

Out in the gallery the knowing ones were saying:

"It'll seem queer to see one of the big games without Manley in it."

"McGuire takes his place. He's believed to be a good man."

"But it won't be the same as if Manley played."

"Why don't they put up the blackboard, showing who the players are?"

"Who captains Woodstock?"

Kitty Dunstan, seated beside her father, close to the rail, could have answered most of these questions, had she chosen, but she smilingly held her peace.

Presently Miss Kitty became aware of a rather persistent stare.

Turning, coolly, she found a pair of black goggles turned fully upon her.

Like a flash, by intuition, she recognized the red-wigged, begoggled young man.

After one disdainful look, Miss Kitty turned her back on her annoyer, and looked out over the gym.

But presently she got up unconcernedly, sauntered away, and then went down the stairs to the main floor.

By one of the club members she sent this message back to Hal:

"Duval, in a red wig, and behind black goggles, is seated in the front row of the right gallery."

"Confound him!" roared Hal, when this message reached him. "So he cheeked himself in, anyway, did he? We'll go out and throw him out, neck and crop!"

"No," retorted Manley, promptly. "We won't do it. We don't want any row at the game. Other people came here to enjoy themselves."

"But, Frank, we can't have that scoundrel in the place."

"His presence is a sort of guarantee," laughed Manley. "While Duval is here we know, at least, that the place won't be blown up by his orders."

Hal subsided, though he still fumed inwardly.

And now Glidden, who was to referee the game, came out on the gym floor. He was greeted with a ripple of applause, but blew his whistle and held up one hand for silence.

"I wish to announce," he began, "that, under Rule 1, Section 2, there will be no boundaries to the playing floor to-night, both captains having requested that. Without delays caused by the ball going out of bounds we can have a much swifter game."

"I wish to make the further announcement that every effort will be made by both teams to refrain from rough playing. It is intended to offer you a game in which clean-cut science, not brute strength, shall determine the score."

Announcement was then made of the names of umpire, time-keeper and score-keeper.

Then, amid the hush, the tramp of feet was heard over the locker-room floor as the two teams fell in to march out.

They appeared, two by two, Woodstock in one file and Bradford in the other.

At the head of the two files marched Frank and Tod.

A general gasp was heard, then a great cheer went up.

"Manley plays! Manley! Good old Manley!"

Old Hek Owen, Tod's father, from his seat in the gallery, looked on and thought:

"Manley's unexpected appearance takes all the glory away from my lad."

Yet in this he was mistaken, for, in another instant, Woodstock people remembered the duties of hospitality.

"Three cheers for Owen and his Bradfords!"

The roar made the windows rattle.

Then the onlookers saw that the two captains were tossing for choice of goal.

Tod won, selected his goal, and then the players scurried to their places.

But right off Woodstock people reconciled themselves to the idea of seeing the home team lose that night.

It was good enough to be able to see Manley on the floor at all, without asking him to lead the winning five.

And now the blackboard was up.

Woodstock was represented by Winston, right forward; Hal, left forward; Manley, center; Joe, right guard, or back, and Humphrey, left guard.

Bradford's line-up was:

Shirley, right forward; Evans, left forward; Tod, center; Distleigh, right guard; Leeson, left guard.

Tod and Frank faced each other in the ring in the center. Referee Glidden, with whistle between his lips, poised the ball in his hands.

Quickly he gave the toss. As the ball reached its greatest height the whistle blew, and the ball was in play.

Both young captains had stood tense for the jump. Now, as the ball fell, both leaped high for it.

Both struck it, but Manley's touch had the more force. It struck the ground behind Tod, bounced up and was in Hal's hands.

Straightening like a flash, for Distleigh was at his side, Hal bent back and made an arching overhead pass.

It was just ahead of Jackets, as that agile little fellow ran for it.

Winston caught the ball, ready to send it back to Hal, who was running to the best point from which to throw from goal.

But big Leeson crashed into Jackets, toppling him to the floor.

It was a foul, yet referee and umpire hesitated, so quickly had it been done.

Yet Jackets was quick-witted enough to send it low over the floor to Manley, who got it.

But, like a flash, Tod snatched the ball with both hands, then, as Frank wheeled and made for him, passed it one-handedly to Evans, and now Joe was in the thick of it.

But Evans passed quickly to Shirley. Humphrey got it, instead, and Bradford's goal was again in danger.

It went to Jackets, who passed it to Hal, then ran out on the floor as if to receive it back for a goal throw.

Leeson closed in on Jackets. Hal made a feint of passing back to Jackets that sent Tod to his guard's aid.

But, by a side pass the ball went, instead to Manley, thus left uncovered for a twinkling instant.

And Frank, expecting just this play, was prepared. He made a quick throw.

On the rim of the basket the ball landed, swayed there

for an anxious instant, while the players looked upward, then rolled down fairly into the basket.

It was Woodstock's first goal, and now the cry went up from a few enthusiasts:

"Is Manley all right?"

CHAPTER IX.

LEESON'S GREWSOME WORK.

It was fast enough work in that first half, yet the team work was so excellent, and the ball so frequently changed sides, that the score did not run up fast.

In the first half of twenty minutes' lively work Winston and Hal had each made a goal throw from field. Frank had made two goals from field, and one from the foul line, missing another throw from foul line. Thus Woodstock's score stood at nine.

For Bradford, Shirley had thrown twice successfully from field, and Tod once. To this Tod had added two successful throws from the foul line, putting Bradford's score at eight.

All of the fouls, so far, had been in Class A—the innocent fouls that the fairest players are likely to make in their excitement.

Hal, the quiet one, was found to be full of feints. Two or three times running he would deceive his opponents by the same trick, and then, suddenly, with the ball again in his hands, he would make the throw just as it looked.

Yet Bradford's play in the second half proved as strong, for Shirley had two goals from field, and Tod three. Added to this, Tod had scored on two throws out of three from foul line.

Winston, on the other hand, had thrown two goals from field for Woodstock, Hal one, and Frank one. Three throws out of five after fouls had been scored by Manley from the twenty-foot line.

The second half was nearly finished, with the score standing at 20 to 20. If the half finished this way it would be necessary to play on until one of the teams scored two more points.

Just before he poised himself for his last throw from the twenty-foot line, Manley sent Hal a mute signal.

It meant:

"Look out for our goal-stealing trick!"

Spofford was on the alert for that from the instant that the ball again went in play from the center.

From Joe, running at full tilt, the ball came down to Jackets on a long pass.

Winston sent it high to Manley.

It was Hal's cue. He darted down the floor to pass Frank.

Manley jumped for the ball, hit it slightly, and without catching, but enough to deflect the ball to Hal, who leaped and got it.

On the opposite side of the floor, further up, was Jackets. It looked like a pass to him.

Leeson was already at Winston. Tod jumped into the breach to help. Even Distleigh ran over toward Leeson's territory.

But Frank had bounded forward, going high in the air. To him instead of Jackets, Hal passed the ball.

It was over in an instant, for Frank, losing no time, made the overhead throw, landing the ball squarely in.

Woodstock had gained a much-needed two points, while Bradford felt, ruefully, that through this clever trickery, a goal had been "stolen."

The onlookers cheered until the referee's whistle warned them to be silent.

Now, the time was fast running out. Glidden tossed the ball quickly. Frank got the ball on the jump, sped it to Hal, who, dodging Shirley, got the ball and set it cornerwards to Jackets.

Like a flash, Frank, as soon as he had passed, was in motion toward that corner.

Winston passed, for Leeson, by a quick, pantherish bound, had left him, rushing at Frank.

Our hero had the ball, might have passed, but big Leeson was intent, now, on scoring his own kind of a goal.

The wall was the goal, Manley the ball, in that wicked manœuvre.

Leeson hurled Woodstock's captain against the wall with a sickening crash that roused the spectators to raging tumult!

For Leeson had used his shoulder, giving it full and forcibly to Manley as the big Bradford man hurled himself against his victim.

Nor could any claim of lack of intention be made, for Leeson's brawny left arm was around Frank as the ball fell to the floor and rolled, unheeded by any of the players, who had shivered at that fearful crash.

Shrilly the referee's and umpire's whistles blew together, and then shrilled a third whistle, the time-keeper's, for the end of the game.

"I couldn't help it—it was a collision," grumbled Leeson, as the other players crowded around Manley, who, backed against the wall, was doing his best to stand up.

Tod flashed one black look at his left guard. If looks could have killed, Leeson would have perished miserably on the spot.

"Never mind; we've got the game," murmured Hal, as he threw a supporting arm around Frank.

"Play it out," said Manley, faintly.

"But the time-keeper has whistled."

"This foul happened just before the call of time," declared Frank, brokenly. "We're entitled to a throw from the twenty-foot line."

"Right," chipped in Referee Glidden, in a tone of authority. "For a Class B foul, made as a goal was to be thrown, I give Woodstock one point against Bradford. And a try from foul line is allowed to Woodstock. As to disqualifying Leeson, it rests with the captains to say, for all that remains is this free throw."

"Oh, let him stay in," suggested Tod. "He'll have nothing to do in this try. To-morrow, I shall suggest to the

club that it disqualify Leeson forever in Bradford by throwing him clean out of the club."

Leeson, in the meantime, stood close to the wall, a dozen feet away from Manley, cowering and saying nothing.

Nor did any player in either team have anything to say to him. It was as if he no longer existed.

"You make the free throw, Hal," muttered Manley.

"You bet I will," answered Hal. "And the best I know how!"

The throw was a perfect one, and then the game was over. The free throw, and the penalty point for fouling, had pushed Woodstock's score up to 24 against Bradford's 20.

Manley was pallid. He walked weakly, though he insisted on going alone as he started down the floor.

From the galleries the spectators came pouring down.

Yet they stood back in sympathetic silence as the young Woodstock captain passed them and was lost to sight in the locker-room.

Here, again, Leeson might have been dead and buried, for all the notice that he got. He was simply and utterly ignored. Bradford felt too humiliated over him to find words for him.

As quickly as he could, Leeson dressed, letting himself out through the back door. He had no relish for the idea of passing out into the crowd.

As for Frank, he tried bravely to get off his togs, but reeled and pitched, clutching at the grating of a locker.

Hal and Joe rushed him over to a couch, but Manley smiled at them.

"Get off my duds, fellows—that will be a great favor," he requested.

Yet, as soon as he was stripped, the young athlete rose and walked toward the shower baths, leaning against the wall until Hal gave him a strong shoulder.

"What I need is a good stream of hot water," smiled Frank.

Hal and Joe attended to that, turning on the water, and rubbing their chief down in the drench, while he held on to the sides of the shower bath.

"Now, after a cold plunge, I guess——" began Frank.

Joe jumped into the plunge ahead of him. Hal helped him down the steps.

After ducking his head well under the cold water, Frank began to swim lazily in the short, narrow plunge.

He came out unaided, though he stood while Hal and Joe gave him the rub down.

Then, coolly enough, Frank went on slowly with his own dressing.

"Tod," quivered Hal, "I hate enough to say anything more about Leeson——"

"Say anything you want, if it's bad enough," cried Tod, angrily.

"I believe that Leeson was hired to do that dirty trick to-night."

"Hired?"

"Yes, by Duval. Else why would Duval be eager enough to get in to come disguised. He sat in the gallery through

the evening. Tod, I feel certain that he came here to see how well Leeson did the job. If you noticed, as I did, Leeson often came near fouling Frank, but Frank's agility saved him."

"Jupiter, I believe you're right," gasped the Bradford captain, his face again as dark as a thunder-cloud. "But I'd give a heap to know—to know for sure and certain—whether Leeson was paid by Duval."

"There's one way you can get a fair idea," went on Hal, eagerly.

"How?"

"Have Leeson watched. See whether he appears to be flush with money. He never had much before. If he seems to be well supplied for the next few days, you can gamble that Duval paid him."

"I will watch," Tod declared, with energy. "He's out of the club now, and for good. But if I hear of Leeson spending any money, I'll know what it means, and I'll thrash him for five minutes after he begs, if it's the last day's work I'm ever able to do!"

"To-morrow," whispered Joe, in Hal's ear, a few moments later, "things will begin to fly Duval's way."

"Then don't tell Frank," whispered Hal, "until to-morrow comes."

CHAPTER X.

TRAINING FOR THE FIGHT OF LIFE OR DEATH!

"Feel more like yourself, old fellow?" asked Hal.

He and Joe suspended their massage work over Frank Manley.

The young captain had just come from a hot shower and cold plunge bath that Saturday morning.

On top of that the two lieutenants of the club had given their leader the best rubbing that they knew how.

"I feel as if I could go into a fight," laughed Frank, leaping up and trying his muscles.

"And that's just what you've got to go into," declared Joe.

"It's the fight for life or death," added Hal, soberly. "If you can't jail Gaston Duval, or drive him out of town, you're done for."

"Thanks to my many good friends, I hope to be able to down him," retorted the young athlete. "Not that I really enjoy downing any one, though," he added quickly. "But Duval has shown that he does not balk even at trying to take my life. So, in self-defense, I've got to hit out at him some way."

"Fight!" growled Joe. "Don't waste any sympathy, or talk about fair play. Stop Duval's game, for good and all!"

"That's the programme for to-day, I believe," Frank answered, slowly. "The only pity is that we must wait for reports from others."

"We'll have that report at the first moment," promised Joe. "Mr. Dunstan and Mr. Jackson have three detectives in town. They're making it their sole business to see whether they can get evidence that will send Duval to jail

for one of his many crimes against you. If the detectives can't get that evidence, then we've got to plan hard as to what else can be done."

"Yet, so far," muttered Frank, "the detectives admit that they haven't been able to get a thread of evidence that will connect Duval with any crime."

"No; but they hope to find that deformed little wretch, Guffle. If they can land the hunchback, they hope to be able to frighten him into telling something."

"They can't," retorted Frank, shaking his head. "You remember that fellow, Jimpson, that we caught and jailed. The police hoped to make Jimpson talk in a way that would lead to Duval. Has Jimpson talked? He's as dumb as an oyster! Catch Guffle, and will they make him talk? Not a word. Guffle would hold his tongue and serve his time. He'd know that rich Duval would make it all right in time. Fellows, if we can't get actual evidence that will send Duval to jail, the whole game seems to be useless. For, as often as we catch and jail two or three of his tools, he knows where to find more—and none of them will betray him. They act as if they didn't dare to betray Duval!"

"Perhaps they don't dare," hinted Hal.

"Then, what is the reason?" asked Frank, his cheeks glowing as he paced up and down the gymnasium's locker-room. "Fellows, it looks pretty certain to me that Gaston Duval doesn't deal directly with any of these fellows. In this country there are great secret societies of criminals. They are closely banded, with men everywhere, and they follow the orders of their leaders without question. Duval must deal with the leaders direct, and these poor thugs who are sent here don't even know why they are doing what they do. They only obey orders. When they are caught, they can't tell anything; and if they could and did tell anything, they know well enough that they would be murdered by the society to which they belong. Now, Guffle may know, in a general way, that he is working for Duval, but none of the thugs working under Guffle are likely to know anything about Duval. And even if this wretched little dwarf, Guffle, were willing to tell us anything, he couldn't find a witness to back up his confession in court."

"I believe that's the solution of it all," cried Hal, who had been listening eagerly.

"You would better explain it to the detectives, anyway," advised Joe, thoughtfully. "We shall soon be talking with one of them, anyway."

"For what time is the appointment?" asked Hal.

"Ten o'clock, at Mr. Jackson's," replied Joe, pulling out his watch. "It's a quarter after nine now. Frank, you'd better dress, and we can stroll slowly up that way."

"It's rather dull, anyway," muttered Hal, "just hanging around and waiting for detectives' reports."

"I feel that we'll do a good deal more than that before many hours are gone," predicted Frank, as he ran to his locker.

The young captain of the Woodstock athletes had, in a measure, recovered from the injuries inflicted by Leeson the night before.

In thinking it over since then, the boys had concluded

that Leeson had intended to strike more foully than he had succeeded in doing.

Even as it was, though Manley, backed by his strong will power, was able to get about, he was far from being in good condition.

As soon as Manley was dressed, the three chums strolled off up the street, and, before long, rang the bell at Mr. Jackson's house.

They were taken to the library. Here they found Thomas Jackson and a stranger seated in chairs that had been drawn up at a big library table.

"Mr. Dean, young gentlemen," announced Mr. Jackson. "Mr. Dean is in charge of the detectives who are working here in Woodstock at present."

"And on the most baffling of cases," replied Mr. Dean, after the introductions had been completed. "Manley, we can find no trace of the fellow who assaulted you before the box-car affair. We can find no trace of the three men who carried you into the woods and tried to hang you. Nor have we been able to discover the slightest clue to that abominable little wretch, Guffle. Either these scoundrels have the most admirable hiding-place, or else they must have vanished off the face of the earth. We have communicated freely with the police everywhere, but they are unable to help us."

"Then nothing whatever has been done," suggested Frank.

"We admit ourselves baffled," agreed Dean, promptly. "As to connecting Duval with any of the crimes of which he is suspected, we haven't been able to get the slightest hope."

"Has Duval had no visitors at the hotel?" Frank inquired.

"None."

"Received any letters?"

"None."

"Mailed any?"

"None."

"Has he gone anywhere at any time since you have been watching him?"

"Only around town, on walks. We have watched him on these walks. We thought we had him up to something last night when he appeared in a wig and wearing goggles. But all he did was to cheek his way into your gymnasium to watch the game. That done, he returned to the hotel, played a lone game of billiards for a while, and then went to bed."

"How about that advertisement in yesterday's Sentinel?" asked Mr. Jackson.

"I had forgotten that," replied Dean, reaching for the paper, which Mr. Jackson pushed toward him. "Duval advertised for a valet. I have studied the advertisement time and again, but without finding any clue in it, and so I have concluded that he was really advertising for a servant that he wanted."

Frank took the advertisement, closely scanning it.

"Then asks the fellow who wants the job to apply between

nine and eleven," hinted the young athlete. "Has any one applied?"

"I don't know. I shall hear later."

"I can find out at once," smiled Frank. "With your permission, Mr. Jackson?"

Frank rang up his store on the telephone. Cranston, who answered, was instructed to find out whether any one had been at the hotel that morning to see Duval.

"And how can you make sure?" cried Dean, eagerly.

"Oh, I have another of our fellows on watch at the hotel," smiled Frank. "You see, Mr. Dean, there are some things that boys can do."

They sat in silence for three or four minutes, and then the bell pealed.

"No one has been to see your man this morning," Cranston reported, briefly.

"Of course not," said Frank, as he turned to the others. "That isn't a genuine advertisement. There are no valets to be had in Woodstock, and Duval didn't expect one. That advertisement is an appointment."

"An appointment?" echoed the detective.

"Certainly. To meet some one at eleven o'clock, or a little after."

The detective stared at the young athlete in a good deal of amazement.

"We shall soon know whether I am right," smiled Manley.

"I hope you are," put in Mr. Jackson, "for I will admit that I am wholly disappointed at the way this investigation has gone so far."

"It wasn't our fault," pleaded Dean. "We have done everything that we could in this limited time."

The telephone bell rang again. Frank sprang to the instrument.

"Duval is leaving the hotel," he announced, turning around. "It looks as if he were going for a walk."

"Headed which way?" broke in Joe.

"Probably for the river road."

"Then he isn't going to Bradford," declared Hal. "He is going out somewhere on a country road that branches off from the Bradford road."

"Will one of your men shadow him?" asked Frank.

"Assuredly," replied Dean, with some heat.

"Then we'll help your man."

Again Frank turned to talk to Cranston. Manley had rapidly mapped out a plan of action that would have been worthy of a general.

Tod Owen and some of his Bradford boys were to watch Duval in case his stroll led him to Bradford.

As to the branch road that led up through the farms of the hill country, Manley planned himself to watch that.

"And, now we're off," cried Frank, hanging up the receiver. "Mr. Dean, do you care to go with us? If you're with us, and your man gets into any trouble, you'll be at hand to help him."

"I believe I will go," assented the detective.

"Then you'll have to hurry, sir, for we've got to do some rapid work."

"Can you use a horse and sleigh, boys?" asked Mr. Jackson. "I have kept a rig hitched in the stable."

"If you can let us have a driver, too, sir," nodded Frank.

"The driver, too," agreed their host. "Come on."

In hardly more than a minute the sleigh, containing the driver, the detective, and the three Up and At 'Em Boys, was speeding out of the Jackson yard.

Frank directed the driver on a course that would take them to the road that led from the river road up through the hill section.

They were not long in reaching the road in question. Certainly they were there ten or fifteen minutes ahead of the time in which Duval could arrive on foot.

Now, the sleigh was sent back, to wait at a distance.

At this point the hill road was bordered on both sides by deep woods.

To the south of the road the watchers hid themselves in the shadows of the forest, yet at a point from which they could scan the road.

"What on earth makes you think that Duval will come out into this wilderness?" fumed the detective.

"He will come to meet some one who doesn't dare appear in town," replied Manley.

"And who may that be?"

"Guffle, most likely. That advertisement was probably printed as a means of informing Guffle when his master would next see him."

"I hope you're right," shivered the sleuth. "It's infernally cold out here in the deep snow."

"If my guess is right, things will soon be warm enough," laughed Frank.

Yet minute after minute passed, and all of the inactive four began to feel the cold.

"There's some one," whispered Joe, at last, pointing to a figure down the road, that could be made out indistinctly between the trees.

Eagerly they watched. As the walker came nearer they recognized Gaston Duval.

He was walking briskly, as if he enjoyed it, nor did he turn to look behind as if he feared pursuit.

The four watchers burrowed more deeply into the snow, to conceal themselves.

On and past them went Duval. The watchers rose, and now they caught sight of another figure, coming stealthily through the woods.

"My man, Purdy," whispered Dean. "You see, he was close on the trail, all along."

As Purdy caught sight of them, Dean waved his hand as a signal to hasten.

Now, all five of the watchers went crouching through the woods. Only Frank, in the lead, made any effort to keep Gaston Duval in sight. It was enough for the others to follow Manley.

They followed, in this fashion, for a quarter of a mile, before Frank suddenly halted. He signed to those behind to crouch low and hurry forward.

"Duval has stepped into the woods, right over yonder," Frank explained, pointing.

"We can follow his trail in that deep snow," laughed Dean.

"But is it worth while for us all to trail him?" asked Frank, quickly. "Why not leave it to me to follow the trail? These woods don't run much farther. Hal can take you all up the road on the run, and you can separate and beat back through the woods. Thus we can meet in the middle, and bag any one who is in these woods. If any one of us stumbles into trouble, he can shout for the rest."

"That's the best plan," nodded Joe.

"Then I've no objection," replied Dean.

"Come along, then," cried Hal, breaking into a run at once for the road.

Reaching the highway, Manley left them, stepping swiftly into the trail into the woods made by Gaston Duval.

"If we can only find Duval and Guffle together," quivered Frank, to himself, "it will begin to look like the finish of the Creole in these parts."

Bending low, and with his eyes on the watch, Manley stepped into the tracks left by his enemy.

At last, after three or four minutes, Manley got a glimpse through the trees of the dark coat of his enemy.

Duval had halted, as if waiting, or else trying to make sure of his bearings.

A low whistle sounded on the air.

"That's from the party he's to meet!" palpitated Manley. "Now, we shall soon see."

Again the whistle rang out.

Now, the black-coated figure ahead turned, running swiftly back over his own trail.

Frank turned to dodge. Then he halted.

"No use," he muttered, grimly. "If I step out of the trail, Duval will see my trail. No use to run back, either. He will see me when he nears the road. Nothing to do but to face the music!"

Stepping out of the trail, behind a tree, Frank waited as coolly as he could.

A few moments, and the black coat was almost close enough to touch.

Duval caught sight of our hero, then sprang back.

"You here, Manley?" he uttered.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ENEMY AT BAY.

"Here, and very much at your service!" mocked Frank. Duval was breathing heavily. His eyes flashed, though his cheeks paled.

"So you followed me?" he quivered.

"Helped to," admitted Frank, cheerfully.

"For what purpose?"

"Guess!"

"Have you come to any good before, Manley, by getting in my way?" demanded the Creole, still eyeing our hero intently.

"No, but I expect to this time."

"What do you think you can do?"

"Let me show you," smiled Frank.

Then, instantly, he raised his voice in a loud shout of:

"This way! Here he is!"

"So you have others with you?"

"You'll soon see."

"I'll take your word," retorted Duval, shortly. "But help will do you no good."

Turning, Duval ran backward several steps.

Frank started to follow, but he saw the sun's glint on steel as the Creole turned.

"It had been better if you had run the other way, Manley!" mocked the Creole.

Duval, fifteen feet away, held a revolver in his hand.

Frank noted how steadily he held the weapon.

"Will you keep back, now?" demanded Duval.

"Yes. There'll be others here in a jiffy."

"You speak so confidently that I begin to believe you," sneered the Creole.

"I'm glad you can believe me."

"I do. Here's my answer."

There was a report, a swift jet of flame from the muzzle, and Manley dropped.

But four more shots rang out ere Duval turned the muzzle away from the prostrate figure.

Then, like a flash, the Creole turned and ran for the road.

And now, up and after him, went Manley.

Our hero had fallen at the first shot, hoping to deceive his enemy long enough to bring help to the scene. He had two bullet-holes through his overcoat—nothing more.

Duval reached the road, diving into the woods on the other side.

Frank, too, reached the road.

"You might as well stop, Duval!" he shouted. "You can't get far."

For an instant the Creole did stop. He had reloaded his weapon as he ran.

Crack!

As Manley leaped into the woods a bullet fanned his face.

This was altogether too close quarters with an enemy who hoped to kill!

Frank jumped behind a tree.

Duval turned to resume his flight through the woods.

Frank rushed after him, dodging behind a tree whenever the Creole turned to menace him with the weapon.

"Here! This way!" bellowed Manley.

Then he asked of himself:

"Where on earth can Hal and the others be?"

Crack! Sput!

Duval, turning in his flight, had fired just as Manley dashed for the shelter of a tree trunk. The bullet carried away a fragment of bark from within three inches of the young athlete's face.

Then, once more, the footrace was resumed through the woods.

Stumble! Through the soft snow Manley floundered in a deep hole.

His head shot down below the level of the snow. He had wrenched an ankle, too.

"Have I spoiled myself for running?" groaned the young athlete.

He tried to stand harder on his injured foot, and found to his joy that he could, though it hurt a trifle.

Then he floundered out of the hole and stood up.

Duval had vanished, leaving behind only his trail through the woods.

"Hey there!" came the hail from behind.

Hal and Joe were coming onward as best they could through the deep snow.

"Come on! Duval's just ahead!" shouted Frank, getting in motion again.

But the injury to his ankle hampered him. Hal and Joe were soon up with him.

"There's the trail," called Frank. "Keep right on, if you can. But look out. Duval has a gun."

"We heard it," floated, grimly, over Joe's shoulder, as he forged forward.

"Hurt?" asked Hal, as he went by.

"It's nothing. Keep on after that son of Satan. I'll follow."

Frank was soon distanced, but he had not much further to go. He came upon Hal and Joe, bending over the prostrate figure of Mr. Jackson's driver.

The poor fellow was unconscious, blood oozing from a gash in the back of his head.

"Sleigh's gone," announced Joe, drily. "And here's some of the Creole's work."

"Then the chase is ended, for the present," muttered Frank. "Duval can make two miles to our one, now, on the way to Woodstock."

"Dean and Purdy have some game back there, anyway," chuckled Joe.

"What?"

"Guffie!"

"Caught sight of him up in the top limbs of an evergreen," laughed Hal. "We left the detectives to get him down out of the tree."

"Then Guffie is all the game we've got," sighed Frank. "However, he may be a good find if we can make him talk."

Hal, working over the driver, had the satisfaction of making him open his eyes.

"What's the row?" asked the driver, faintly.

"Guess you were struck down," muttered Joe.

"Where's the sleigh?" asked the man, sitting up slowly, and staring around.

"Don't you remember anything?" asked Frank.

"Why, I was sitting in the sleigh the last thing I remember," protested the man.

"And Duval stole up behind you and cracked you in the back of the head with the butt of his pistol," guessed Frank. "No matter. We can't help it now. We'd better go back and see whether Dean can get Guffie to earth without chopping the tree down."

But, as they returned to the hill road, they found Dean and Purdy leading the hunchback between them.

"Let me go!" screamed Guffle, trying to wrench himself free. "There is my good friend, Manley! He will tell me what this riddle means!"

"Oh, you'll find that out soon enough," retorted Dean, taking an extra hitch in the hunchback's collar.

"What does this mean, good Master Manley?" cried the dwarf.

"Can't you guess?" asked Frank, coldly.

"On my soul, I can't!" protested Guffle.

"Has a soul been wasted on such a thing as you?" demanded Joe, bluntly, as he looked the hunchback over scornfully.

"What did those shots mean?" Dean wanted to know.

Frank quickly explained, Guffle listening as if he could not make out the meaning of a word.

Even at the driver's wounded head the dwarf stared stupidly.

"We've got to walk back," summed up Frank, "so I suppose it will be a good idea to start at once."

Dean left Guffle to the care of his associate, and walked on ahead with the boys and the driver.

"It's Duval's luck," grumbled Dean. "Not a one but you, Manley, saw Duval shoot. You haven't a single witness to back you up. And none of us saw Guffle and Duval meet, for the reason that they didn't meet."

"No," grimaced Manley. "From his high-up perch Guffle saw me, and spoiled our only chance of catching them together."

"I'll leave you and go back to the dwarf," suggested Dean. "We've got to make that little rascal talk, if there is any way of doing it."

But the hunchback proved the hardest kind of a being to pump. He could not be frightened, nor would he admit that he knew Gaston Duval.

"After a few days behind the bars, you may change your mind," uttered Detective Dean, grimly.

"Behind the bars?" echoed the hunchback, shrewdly. "On what charge am I to be put there? Is it a crime to climb a tree?"

The detective winced. So far as any evidence was in his hands, he could not legally accuse Guffle of anything.

"I'm getting almost discouraged," Frank admitted, to his chums, as they trudged along over the road. "Duval seems to be protected by the Evil One himself. Whatever he does, he slides out of the consequences as a rat slips into a hole. He's simply too slick to be caught."

"So you're going to give up trying to catch him? You're going to leave Woodstock, and give up the game?" asked Joe, bluntly.

Frank did not answer. He had turned to look over his shoulder at the detectives who were talking with Guffle, and now our hero started, then stood still, staring at the hunchback.

"Stop right there—don't move!" he shouted. "Don't stir!"

A quick change came into the hunchback's sly face.

"I saw this poisonous little wretch throw away something," explained Frank, as he reached the detectives. "Now, whatever he throws away is sure to be something that we want to see."

"Why, surely, Master Manley," protested the dwarf, "your eyes must be playing you tricks."

"It looked like a ball of paper," replied Frank, searching in the snow at the roadside. "And, by the Great Dewey, here it is!"

"Whatever it is, it did not come from me, as I am an honest young man," the hunchback declared, solemnly.

But paying no heed to Guffle, Frank slowly unrolled the tiny paper ball.

"An address," said Frank, grimly. "'James Snaffle, Bloxton.'"

He looked up at the others, who had crowded around him.

"Oho, Guffle," mimicked Frank, "you don't like this discovery. No, you needn't try to look as if you didn't care, for I see that you do. Either this Snaffle is one of your gang, or he is hiding one of the thugs who help you."

"Perhaps you had better see this Snaffle, then," jeered the dwarf.

"And that we will, and in mighty short order, too," clicked Frank, at which calling of the bluff Guffle's face again fell.

Then, to the detectives, Frank added hurriedly:

"I hope it isn't necessary to suggest that you must be mighty careful that this little wretch doesn't have the slightest chance to get any word to Duval. We must get over to Bloxton as soon as it can be done. It's only fifteen miles away."

"By rail?" asked Dean.

"No; but Mr. Jackson will lend us his swiftest automobile. There mustn't be a moment lost in learning all we can about James Snaffle of Bloxton!"

With this hope to spur them on, the little party trudged rapidly into Woodstock.

Guffle was taken promptly to the police station and locked up as a suspicious character, and Chief Griscomb promised that no one should have a chance to talk with him.

Of Duval, nothing was seen on the streets. But word came from Jackets that the Creole had returned to the hotel and was now in his room.

Later in the day the abandoned horse and sleigh were found a mile outside of Woodstock.

Now that Guffle was under lock and key, Frank hurried his small force back to Mr. Jackson's.

Here an automobile was ordered out quickly for the flying trip to Bloxton, a small farming town up over the hills.

"You'd better stay behind, Frank," Hal urged, anxiously, as he noted his chum's wan-looking face. "You've been through enough this week to kill most men. You're not needed with us, and you may need some strength before the day is over. Stay behind, old fellow."

To this advice, Mr. Jackson added his own persuasion.

So Frank agreed to remain in the library until the party returned with its news.

After Hal and Joe had gone off with the detectives, Mr. Jackson began to pace the library floor.

"I'm worried over this business," sighed the rich man, at last.

"Why, Mr. Jackson," smiled Frank, from the sofa on which he was lying, "Gaston Duval is not trying to do you any harm."

"He will before we are through with him!"

"But why should he go out of his way to harm you?"

"He has a grudge against Joe already, for the part he has taken in helping you."

"Possibly."

"Then, Frank, do you doubt that he knows how much Joe is wrapped up in my daughter, Fannie? Don't you see that Duval may plot harm against my only child, in order to spite Joe? And Duval is wonderfully, infernally successful."

"I'm still alive," laughed Frank, easily.

"It's no laughing matter, my boy," faltered the old man, sinking into a chair. "Frank, I'd gladly give twenty thousand dollars to-day to get that infernal Creole out of this town for good."

"You would?" cried Frank, suddenly leaping up from the sofa. "Then it's barely possible that you can do it."

CHAPTER XII.

"WORKING THE THIRD DEGREE."

"We've got him!" cried Hal, bursting eagerly into the library.

"Well, who?" quivered Frank, stepping forward quickly.

"From the description, I guess it's the fellow who started you on that box-car ride. Here he is now."

Frank needed but one look at the man whom Dean and Purdy now led into the room.

"That is the fellow. I identify him, positively," declared Manley.

There could be no doubt that this frightened, vicious-looking fellow was Bumpus. The wretch was too badly frightened to deny his guilt.

"What are you going to do with me?" he faltered.

"Hang you, if we can," retorted Detective Dean, drily.

"Oh, you wouldn't do that!" protested the frightened wretch.

"Well, we might let you off more easily if you told us all you can."

"But what can I tell you?"

"Tell us who hired you to try to kill Manley. But be sure you tell us the truth. Guffie is in the look-up now, and he's talking a good deal. So don't try any lies with us."

"That Guffie is the very devil himself!" cried Bumpus, thickly.

"No, not that, but he's been working for the Arch Fiend," rejoined Dean.

"It was Guffie who got me into all this trouble."

"We know that. And also how much you were to be paid if you had succeeded in killing Manley."

"Did Guffie tell you that?" asked the terrified wretch.

"That's only the small part of what he's told us," lied Dean. "About the only show you've got is to tell us more than Guffie did."

Mr. Jackson and the boys looked on and listened with interest. This was the "working of the third degree," as it is practiced by the police.

Two suspected accomplices in a crime are separated, and each is assured that the other has confessed.

The criminal who is undergoing the third degree is made to understand that his only hope lies in making as clean a breast as his accomplice has done.

In some of the cities of the United States the police have another feature of the "third degree," known as the "sweat box." This is a cell where the air is hot, and almost stifling—a cell whose ceiling is so low that the prisoner cannot stand up straight. Sometimes a prisoner is kept in the "sweat box" for several days before the torment causes him to unlock his lips and tell what he knows.

But the "sweat box" was not necessary with Bumpus. Terror alone was enough to hold over this ignorant wretch.

Under the questioning of Dean, Bumpus probably told all that he really knew. He admitted that he had been employed by Guffie before, though never in so serious a criminal matter as the affair at the ice houses.

Had he succeeded, Bumpus was to have been paid a thousand dollars. Failing, he had been helped off over the road by Guffie, who had told him not to try to go too far, and then to seek out some lonely farm and offer good pay in return for hiding him.

Bumpus had found Snaffle, a simple-minded farmer near Bloxton. Bumpus had told a story of trying to evade arrest for debt, and had worked into Snaffle's good graces.

The paper that Frank had picked up by the roadside was one that Bumpus had mailed Guffie, at Barberville, to let the hunchback know his whereabouts.

Of Duval Bumpus had no knowledge. This he stuck to stoutly, and his hearers believed him.

This, after all, was not much gained. The downing of the Creole seemed as remote as ever.

"We'll take the fellow to the lock-up before the auto is put up, anyway, proposed Dean. "And we can confront Guffie with this man."

Frank decided to go along and see the meeting. He rode on the front seat with the chauffeur, while Dean and Purdy, with their captive, got in behind. Hal and Joe hurried after on foot.

At a street corner they passed Duval, who was walking slowly.

The Creole, at sight of Bumpus, changed color slightly. Frank regarded his enemy with a mocking smile.

"We're getting a bit on Duval's nerves," smiled Frank to himself.

At the station house Bumpus was allowed to sit down in the office.

Guffie was brought upstairs, shown a moment at the door, and then hurried below.

"That's the fellow who hired you?" asked Dean.

"That's him," growled Bumpus.

Then Chief Griscomb, the boys and the detectives went down and stood before the door of Guffe's cell.

"Your pal has been doing a heap of talking," hinted Chief Griscomb. "Don't you feel as if you'd like to save yourself some trouble by talking?"

But Guffe only yawned. And that was the sole reply that he would make to the further questions that they put to him.

"It's no use with that little wretch," grumbled Griscomb, as they climbed the stairs again. "He's been through the third degree before, I'm thinking."

"And Duval is walking at large," muttered Frank, after Bumpus had been led below.

"But my other man was close to him when we passed the fellow," replied Dean.

"That gives me a little idea," hinted Frank. "Why don't you set Mr. Purdy to shadowing him, too? Let them do it a little openly, so that Duval will realize that, while two of his tools are in the lock-up, he is being shadowed by two men at the same time."

"What good will that do?"

"Why, it may get on his nerves. It's the only way we can work the third degree on him."

"It's not bad, as I haven't anything else for Purdy to do," admitted Dean.

The plan was carried out with such good effect that, within twenty minutes, Gaston Duval realized that he was being shadowed. He turned and went back to the hotel, shutting himself up in his room.

But other mischief was hatching now.

Manley had gone into the fight in earnest. He thought he saw his way clear, at last, to ridding himself of his enemy, and he hurried off to perfect his plans.

But Hal kept with him throughout the busy afternoon.

"Now, you've got to quit, old fellow," ordered Hal, at last. "You're in no shape, anyway, and you've got to rest before you drop."

"I've got to take a look in at my store, anyway," Frank agreed.

"Then I'll go with you, and leave you there, if you'll promise to go home from the store. Joe and I can keep that other matter swinging."

So to the store Manley went. Seated at his desk in the little rear office he realized how tired he was.

Yet he remained, looking over the books and writing a few business letters, until after dark.

Then, closing his desk, Manley started for home.

He turned down into Franklin avenue and made for his house.

He reached his gate, pushed it open, then stepped into his yard.

As he did so, a figure crouching behind the fence sprang over.

"Duval!" uttered Frank, stepping back.

In some way, then, his enemy had slipped by the shadowing detectives.

"I want a word with you—now—Manley," came the Creole's chilling answer.

He stood there in all his superb young athletic strength.

Manley, battered and worn out, cut but a sorry figure before him.

"You ought to have known better, Manley, than to have thought you could win over me," came the jeering taunt.

"I might retort," smiled Frank, grimly, "that, up to date, you have failed to win out over me."

"But I shan't fail any longer!"

With that, the Creole leaped forward to strike him.

Frank knew that he was overmatched. He felt incapable of standing the onslaught.

But, in the Creole's right hand, our hero saw the glint of a steel blade.

A cold-blooded assassination!

That aroused all the grim despair in Frank Manley's nature, and, with it, all his sterling fighting blood.

He dodged back, with an agility that surprised even himself.

It was no longer a boxing-match, but a fight with open, naked hands against a steel edge.

With a sneering laugh Duval edged in closer. Manley dodged, watching as warily as a cat.

Gaston Duval realized the folly of rushing in headlong. If he did so he might lay himself open to a blow from Manley's fist, and there might be too much strength still left in the blow.

"You can't get away," hissed the Creole, as he advanced, watching his chance.

"Neither can you," taunted Frank. "Duval, I prefer this kind of a fight—where you show your teeth openly and give me a chance to strike back."

Duval suddenly lunged forward with the knife. Manley caught the wrist with both hands, holding on for dear life.

With his left, Duval began to rain down blows, and now the young athlete found his voice.

"Help!" he shouted, in his loudest tones. "Help!"

Still he held desperately with both hands to Duval's right wrist.

The Creole tried, with his left fist, to knock Manley out. Though the blows staggered our hero, he managed to keep shouting.

Then, with a curse, Duval dropped the knife, wrenched his captured wrist free, made a swift vault over the fence, and vanished in the darkness.

And now help came in plenty. Mrs. Manley opened the door. The men living in the houses on either side rushed out, but Frank, bruised and weak, and holding the knife in one hand, muttered to himself:

"The same old story! Duval gets away before witnesses get around."

Yet Duval's shrift was running short.

Before eight o'clock that evening Dr. Holbrook, by invitation, sat in Mr. Jackson's library. The good old principal of the academy listened with groans to the story of the Creole's doings as related by Mr. Jackson.

"And yet, as you admit, there isn't a shred of proof that

young Duval has been mixed up in these crimes," protested Dr. Holbrook.

"There's proof enough of the kind that satisfies the community," retorted Thomas Jackson, sternly. "Dr. Holbrook, I voice the demand of this town when I ask you to expel Gaston Duval from your academy for good and all!"

"But that's impossible," faltered the doctor. "My dear Mr. Jackson, Duval's uncle holds an overdue mortgage on my poor academy property. If I send him away, he'll foreclose and ruin me."

"If you don't send him away," retorted Mr. Jackson, "something else will happen. Doctor, if Duval continues at your academy, every other pupil there will leave. Here is a paper to that effect, signed by all your pupils. Each one of them has his parents' consent to the plan. Now, if all your pupils do leave you, I shall immediately found another academy in this town. Doctor, what is your answer? Does Duval go?"

"Then I am ruined, either way," cried the old man.

"Not wholly," smiled Mr. Jackson. "That is where the rest of my plan comes in. Doctor, tell Duval to-night that he cannot attend your academy any longer, and I will, at any time you ask, furnish you with the money to meet that mortgage. Now, what is your answer?"

Dr. Holbrook arose, a trifle unsteadily.

"Gaston Duval goes," he answered.

"Good! And when will you tell him so?"

"I will see him at once, at the hotel. There can be no better time than the present."

"You will not mention my name in the matter?"

"I shall not."

"Doctor," said Mr. Jackson, extending his hand, "when-ever you find yourself in difficulties, please consider me your very good friend."

Dr. Holbrook went straight to the hotel.

For some fifteen minutes the principal and pupil were closeted together.

Then Dr. Holbrook, looking rather well satisfied with himself, came downstairs and left the hotel.

On the sidewalk he encountered Hal and Joe.

"Any news of Duval, sir?" asked Spofford.

"He is no longer a pupil of the academy," responded the doctor. "You youngsters certainly did your work well this afternoon!"

Not long afterwards it became noised about that an express wagon had been to the hotel for baggage, and that Duval was hustling to leave town on the ten o'clock train.

It was wonderful how fast that tip traveled, bringing most of the Up and At 'Em Boys before Manley's store within fifteen minutes.

Frank himself came hurrying up at the news, for he scented the possibility of mischief afloat in the air.

"We've passed the word around with great thoroughness," hinted Cranston, suggestively. "There'll be a crowd of boys and older people at the depot, you bet! We are all going to hoot as Duval appears, and keep up the din until the train moves out."

"That's just what I hope you won't do," retorted Manley,

shaking his head. "It isn't the most dignified thing we can do, nor the most cutting. See here, Cranston, have your crowd there, and let them preserve absolute silence as Duval steps on to the platform and waits for his train. That awful, hostile silence will get on his nerves quicker than anything else could do."

The new word was quickly passed; the crowd gathered at the railway station to wait and watch.

Duval came in a cab. As soon as he stepped out and caught sight of the waiting hundreds, he started back.

Every eye was on him, but no word was spoken.

Drawing himself up stiffly, the young Creole moved through the crowd. Every one near moved to make way for him, but the sneering glances that he encountered hurt more than any words could have done.

Gaston Duval stood at the edge of the platform, his legs trembling under him.

It was a great relief to him when the train steamed up.

With a bound, Duval seized at the hand rail and pulled himself up on to the car steps, still amid the tense, unnatural silence.

But just now a man pushed his way through the crowd, laid a heavy hand on the young Creole's coat collar, and yanked him from the steps.

"I guess you'll go back with me, Duval," said Chief Griscomb, coldly, decisively.

"What on earth do you mean, officer?" the young Creole almost screamed.

"As soon as Guffle found out you were skipping, and leaving him to his own devices, he began to talk," replied the officer. "I reckon he has talked more in the last hour than he ever did before in his life. He talked enough to send Bumpus and himself and you behind the bars for a few years to come!"

And behind the bars all of that miserable trio went.

THE END.

A story of ice sport that will make every real boy's blood tingle is "FRANK MANLEY'S ICE BOAT REGATTA; OR, THE FELLOWS WHO CAME IN SECOND BEST." This magnificent story of winter athletics will be published complete in No. 19 of Frank Manley's Weekly, out next week! Don't miss it! "Physical Director" has never written a more exciting story about the doings of young athletes.

SPECIAL NOTICE: All back numbers of this weekly are always in print. If you cannot obtain them from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

PRACTICAL TALKS ON TRAINING

By "Physical Director"

No. 50.

Basket-ball is a game that is coming more into favor every year. It is a game that I can heartily recommend to my readers.

When the game first came into vogue there was a prejudice against it as "a girl's game."

It has been proven, however, that basket-ball can be made a rough enough game to put it on a par with the most savage football.

Already, however, a decided reaction has set in against the rougher methods of playing basket-ball. The tendency, this year, is to discredit all rough playing, and also to discountenance the teams that play roughly.

Few sports are better than basket-ball, for the reason that, even without roughness, it furnishes a strong test of the player's speed, agility, skill and endurance.

It is a game in which a strong heart and good lung power are demanded. Two or three minutes of quick play will send the short-winded youngster to the wall.

In scientific possibilities not even football is superior to basket-ball. The game is so simple that it seems almost childish to the beginner. Yet, with all the fouls that are barred, and with the necessity for goaling the ball without resorting to any of these fouls, so much head-work is called for that long and constant practice is needed to make a really good team out of promising material.

One change in this year's rules makes much more practice necessary than was formerly the case.

Under former rules tries for goal after a foul were made from a line not less than fifteen feet from the basket.

This year the revised rules provide that the foul line must be from a line not less than fifteen feet from the basket.

This simple change in the rules will call for much more expert playing by at least three men out of five on the team.

It has been considered that a good player should make three out of five goals tried for from the foul line.

Now, the little fact of having to make the throw at a distance of twenty feet will make the work of getting the ball into the basket much harder.

Usually the task of making these free throws after a foul devolves upon center. But either of the forwards is likely to be called upon to make the free throw instead.

Hence, center and forwards, alike, should have much

practice this season, in throwing from the newly-prescribed foul line. Otherwise, many goals will be lost that otherwise might have been scored.

To the captains of ambitious teams I wish to offer another hint. In practice games on the home floor there is altogether too much of a tendency to play the regular team against a scrub team.

Now, of course, these scrub games are needed. They must be played from time to time, in order that the team will be used to fighting opponents.

But a form of practice that is needed much more than it is had is practice in which only members of the regular team take part. These members should be drilled in working with each other—should be patiently and persistently kept at work learning how to pass to each other in all the combinations of strategy that can be devised. The team should be taught to pull so well together that combinations will seldom fail of being carried out. Then, once in a while, bring in the scrub in order to see how well the team has learned its own business.

Captains should discourage guards, or backs, generally, from trying to make goals on long passes. More goals are lost than won by this foolish effort on the part of guards to secure some of the glory. The guard who puts up a good wall against the adversary scoring goals is winning quite glory enough.

In most of the junior teams that I have seen play the lack of wind is all too evident.

Now, for developing a wind that will last through a hard-fought game the best work of which I know is found with the medicine ball.

Form your men in an irregular circle, and have one less medicine ball than there are men.

Thus, with five men you would have four medicine balls.

Now, begin passing these balls around the circle rapidly to the right, keeping each one in the circle on the jump in passing one ball and receiving the next.

After passing the balls around to the right for a few minutes, rest the squad, and then begin passing the balls around to the left.

A team drilled in this way with the medicine balls, and drilled severely, is not likely to be found breathless in a good, swift game of basket-ball.

Then running on the track should be practiced every day through the season.

For agility in dodging, outside of the regular team practice, frequent sharp games of "tag" should be indulged in.

While you are at the training, the value of honest practice in jumping should not be overlooked.

A good jump often leads to winning a goal.

Jumping is something that should not be left, however, to regular training work in the gym. Every member of the team can find plenty of chances for working at jumping through the day.

Letters from Readers

NOTICE.—Write letters for this page on only one side of the paper. Number your questions. Do not ask questions on the same paper containing mail orders. Immediate answers cannot be given, as "Frank Manley's Weekly" is printed several weeks ahead of the date of issue. Address all questions for this department to "Physical Director," No. 24 Union Square, New York.

Memphis, Tenn., Sept. 21, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Have read a few of the Frank Manley series, and expect to read them all the time. I would be glad to have you answer a few questions for me. The only exercise I have ever taken was in playing baseball and football. I am 18 years 9 months old, weight 127 pounds, height (in stocking feet) 5 feet 6 inches, neck 13 inches, around shoulders 40 inches, chest contracted 30 inches, chest normal 32½ inches, chest expanded 35½ inches, right biceps normal 9½ inches, right biceps contracted 10½ inches, right forearm normal 9½ inches, right forearm contracted, 10¼ inches, left biceps normal 9 inches, left biceps contracted 10 inches, left forearm normal 8¾ inches, left forearm contracted 9¼ inches, waist 28½ inches, thighs 19 inches, left calf 12½ inches, right calf 12 3-8 inches, ankles 9 inches, knees 14 inches. (1) How are my measurements? Remember I have had no training. (2) How can I broaden my shoulders, enlarge my chest expansion? (3) How can I increase the size of my left forearm? (4) How much should I weigh, and how can I gain weight? (5) In general, what kind of exercise should I take? Wishing you a life success, I remain,

Yours truly,

Jimmie J.

(1) Measurements generally good, except inch too much at waist. Go in for training, as merely following sports is not enough if you want to reach manhood at your best physically. (2) Horizontal bar, trapeze, flying rings, bag-punching, boxing, jiu-jitsu and wrestling. (3) By exercising it faithfully. (4) You are right weight now. (5) All-around exercise, running included.

Buffalo, N. Y., Sept. 21, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

To-day is the first time that I have ever read your weekly, although I sell a lot of them at my place of business. A chum of mine urged me to read one of them, and I did so. Say, if you ever saw a surprised youth it was yours truly. After I had read No. 3 I at once commenced to read all the back numbers, and you can imagine my horror when I found out that I only had Nos. 1, 2 and 32 on hand. I am almost ashamed of my name. I would like to state that the Frank Manley Weekly can certainly deliver the goods. I would like to ask your advice on a couple of questions. I am 18 years of age, height 5 feet 4 inches, weight 122. (1) How can I reduce my weight? (2) I am captain of the True Blue basketball team; is basketball a good exercise? (3) What exercises would you advise me to take as an amateur wrestler? I hold the 120-pound amateur championship of Western New York, and would like to break into professional company. (4) Would you advise me to do so? (5) I can do 100 yards in 11¾ seconds; do you think I can lower this record? (6) I can muscle up the 100-pound dumbbell with my right arm, but I can't muscle 45 pounds with my left. Why is this? How can I strengthen my left hand and arm? Well, goodbye for this time. I will close with three cheers for Frank Manley. I remain, a new but greatly interested reader,

George Merriwell,
317 Broadway.

(1) There are three ways of reducing weight, all of them necessary in combination. They are, to eat less and avoid starchy or sweet foods, to exercise briskly and plentifully and not to sleep too much. (2) Basketball is a splendid sport and exercise when it is not played roughly. Your friend, Physical Director, has urged all along against "rough-house" sport, and you

probably noted in the papers recently that President Roosevelt summoned college trainers to the White House to urge them against rough sport. There is probably no connection between the two events, but both serve to show that the new and better ideal of American sport will be gentlemanly sport, with "rough-house" games relegated to the uncivilized. I make these remarks because basketball is a splendid game that, too often, is played on the rough order. Refuse games with gangs of roughs. (3) All-around training is best for the wrestler, for in his ring work he has to use every muscle in every possible way. But of course there must be a lot of light, quick work, so that one does not become muscle-bound. (4) By all means. (5) With practice, yes, considerably. (6) Because you are doing too much right-side work—a great mistake in a wrestler. Train so that both sides will be equally developed.

Seneca, S. C., Sept. 23, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I thought I would write you for some advice regarding my measurements. I am 12 years 6 months old, height 5 feet 2½ inches, across shoulders 13 inches, chest normal 30½ inches, expanded 32 inches, neck 12 inches, waist 27 inches, hips 29½ inches, left thigh 17 inches, right thigh 17½ inches, calves 12 inches, arm normal 8 inches, arm expanded 9 inches, wrist 6 inches, ankles 8½ inches. I take twenty-five deep breaths every morning on rising. It does not hurt me to jog a half mile, but it causes me to pant. I do not use tobacco or whisky in any way. (1) How are my measurements? (2) What are my weak points, and strong ones, if I have any. Please point out my defects and state what will cure them. (3) Is anything gained by breathing through the nose while running, or while sleeping? Pardon me for writing such a long letter. Hoping to see it in print, I am,

Yours truly,

A Would-be Athlete.

Failure to state weight makes it impossible for me to answer. Breathing through nose is to be preferred when sleeping, or when running, though many very good runners take much of the breath through the mouth.

Philadelphia, Pa., Sept. 23, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Seeing your kind offer in Frank Manley's Weekly, I take the privilege of writing you. Kindly let me know whether I am built in good proportion. My age is 18 years 2 months, weight 130, height 5 feet 8 inches, waist 29 inches, chest normal 34 inches, expanded 37 inches, wrist 6¾ inches, ankle 8½ inches, calf 14 inches, thighs 17½ inches, neck 13¼ inches, knee 15 inches, shoulders 17 inches, forearm 10 inches, biceps 9½ inches, expanded 11½ inches, reach 29 inches. I get a pain in my right side when I am walking fast. How can I stop it?

Yours truly,

Kid Mac.

Measurements good, but ten pounds under weight. Pain in the side is caused by weakness of muscles there. Walking and running, with gymnastics, will gradually overcome this tendency.

Alexandria, Va., Sept. 25, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all the Frank Manley books issued, and they are the most interesting I have yet seen. I will ask you a few questions about my measurements. (1) Age 14 years, height 5 feet ½ inch, weight 88 pounds, arm 7½ inches, flexed 9 inches, neck 11½ inches, calf 11½ inches,

chest normal 20½ inches, chest expanded 21½ inches, wrist 5½ inches, forearm 8¼ inches, waist 25¼ inches, thigh 15½ inches. (2) I can chin four times. Is that good? (3) After I am through chinning I have a pain in the pit of my stomach; what causes it? (4) I drink milk with my meals and lots of water after them. (5) I use a punching bag and parallel bar. (6) Would you advise 1-pound Indian clubs? (7) I would like to develop my whole upper body; what exercises would you advise? (8) Are static contraction exercises good? I will now close. Hoping to see this in print, I remain a

F. M. W. Reader.

(1) Neck and calf small; waist a little too large; inch more of chest expansion needed. (2) Ten chinings are only fairly good. (3) Due to weakness of abdominal muscles. Faithful exercise will gradually overcome this. (4) Drinking milk at meal times is not good unless you rinse the milk around in the mouth several times before swallowing. If you use milk only to wash the food down, you are injuring yourself. Don't use milk to soften your food, either; chew your food to make it soft, or otherwise your teeth will decay early. (6) Yes; or two-pounders. (7) Read Talks 44 and 45. (8) I do not use them.

Worcester, Mass., Sept. 21, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Please answer me some questions through your magnificent weekly. How can I make myself the same on both sides? I am developed more on the right side than on the left. The abdominal muscles have developed most on the left side. There is a great difference in the legs. I have had an inflamed vein in the left leg, and have a slight varicose vein behind the right knee. Here are my measurements, stripped: Age 17 years 6 months, weight 162½ pounds, height 5 feet 11½ inches, neck 15½ inches, chest normal 38½ inches, expanded 40¼ inches, shoulders 17¼ inches wide, waist 31½ inches, right arm down 111-8 inches, up 12½ inches, right forearm 11½ inches, left arm down 10¾ inches, up 12¼ inches, left forearm 11 3-8 inches, right thigh 22 1-8 inches, right knee 14 7-8 inches, right calf 14 7-8 inches, right ankle 9¼ inches, left thigh, 22 5-8 inches, left knee 14 7-8 inches, left calf 16 inches, left ankle 9½ inches. Is there any cure for varicose veins? How can I get rid of mine? Hoping my letter is not too long, I remain

A Faithful Reader.

Exercise both sides of the body evenly, but the presence of a varicose vein complicates matters; better see a surgeon about that vein. There is no cure in the physical training line that I could advise without seeing the vein. Your measurements are good, except that more chest expansion is needed.

Dear Physical Director:

You would greatly oblige me by answering the following questions. I am 15 years 9 months old, height 5 feet 3 inches, weight 112 pounds, chest normal 31½ inches, expanded 33½ inches, waist 30 inches, neck 13 inches, wrist 7 inches, calves 12¼ inches, ankles 10 inches, forearm 9½ inches, across shoulders 16 inches. (1) How are my measurements? (2) Which are my weak points? (3) How can I remedy them? In running, should a person take deep breaths while going, or as soon as he stops? Should the knuckles be toward you or away from you when chinning yourself? Hoping to see all this in print, I am,

A Reader.

(1 and 2) Waist line five inches too large. Chest expansion not sufficient. (3) Read Talks 44 and 45. (4) If you mean sprinting the hundred yards, the best plan is to start with the lungs full, and keep this breath until twenty-five yards have been covered. Then exhale. At between fifty and sixty yards take in another deep breath; exhale this and get another deep breath in the last spurt. Generally in chinning the knuckles are toward the performer, but this may be varied by having them away from him.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear Physical Director:

I have been training myself diligently according to the methods presented to you in your practical talks. I am 17 years 1 month old,

weight 170 pounds stripped, height 6 feet 1 inch in stocking feet, across shoulders 19½ inches, neck 15 inches, chest normal 35½ inches, contracted 34 inches, expanded 40 inches, waist, 25 inches, hips 34 inches, thigh average 21 inches, knee average 15 inches, calf average 15½ inches, ankle average 9½ inches, biceps average 11¼ inches, biceps flexed 14 inches, forearm average 9¾ inches, wrist average 7¼ inches, reach 72 inches; legs are very long—35 inches. (1) What do you think of my measurements? (2) What are my weak points? (3) What line of athletics do you think I am best fitted for? Thanking you in advance, I remain,

B. R.

(1 and 2) Splendid development. (3) Field and track.

Glendale, Cal.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a constant reader of Frank Manley's Weekly, the king of all weeklies, I wish to add my mite of praise, and also ask a few questions. Frank Manley is my ideal of an American boy. Hal is a dandy, and Joe is also 'there with the goods.' My measurements are: Neck 15 inches, arm 11¼ inches, flexed 13¾ inches, forearm 12¼ inches flexed; chest normal 37, contracted 33½, expanded 41, lung capacity 326 cubic inches. I have blown that much on a lung tester. Waist 29 inches, hips 36 inches, thigh 21 inches, calf 14¼ inches, ankle 9 inches, wrist 7 inches, height 5 feet 8¼ inches, weight 143 pounds stripped, age 18 years 1 month. (1) How are these measurements? (2) What are my weak points? (3) What distance ought I to be best at? (4) Last year I ran a half in 2:10. (5) What ought I to do it in this year? (6) Are moles a sign of impure blood? (7) How can they be eradicated? I get up at 4:45 every morning and exercise for three-quarters of an hour, after which I take a shower bath. Is that all right? In the afternoon at 3:30 I spend half an hour punching the bag, on the horizontal bar, and with the dumbbells. I use three-pounders. Are they too heavy? Kindly pardon this long letter and give my regards to Frank and 'Kit.' With best wishes to yourself and publishers, and awaiting an early reply, in your weekly, I am, an admirer of Frank.

K. A.

(1) Measurements indicate very strong young man. (2) No noticeably weak points. (3) Should judge you could train to do a good fast mile. (4) In from 2:02 to 2:05. (5) Answered. (6) Generally birthmarks. (7) Out of my line. Your training habits are good, but between five and six will be early enough for rising in the winter. Two-pound bells are heavy enough for any boy.

Pittsburg, Pa.

Dear Physical Director:

I have just finished No. 3 of Frank Manley's Weekly, and I think they are as good as ever. Following are a few questions I should like answered: (1) Do you think any harm will come by going without underdrawers in the winter? (2) How do my measurements compare with those of a young athlete? Calves 14½ inches, ankles 9½ inches, neck 13½ inches, biceps 12½ inches, forearm 11 inches, chest normal 34½ inches, chest expanded 35½ inches, shoulders 19 inches, wrist 6 inches. The preceding measurements were taken stripped. Following are my training rules: Rise at 7:30; breakfast at 8; lunch at 12; dinner 6 p. m.; retire 9:30. I take exercise with dumbbells, Indians clubs, punching bag, wall machines, horizontal bar and wands.

Yours respectfully,

E. H.

(1) I strongly advise at least medium weight drawers in winter, though I do not approve of heavy underwear. (2) Your measurements are not complete enough for me to see anything but very poor chest expansion. (3) Why not retire early and rise earlier?

South Bound Brook, N. J., Sept. 19, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

When your fine book first came out I did not start to read it, but one day I was going past a newsstand, and seeing a nice picture on the cover, I bought one, and am glad that I did, because the boys that do not get them don't know what they miss. I would like you to answer a few questions. My measurements are: Age 16 years, height 5 feet 3½ inches, weight

115 pounds, chest normal 28½ inches, chest expanded 31 inches. Can do the broad jump, running, 12 feet; standing 7 feet 6 inches. Can put 14-pound shot 15 feet 8 inches. (1) How are my measurements? (2) How are my records? (3) Where is Woodstock? Kindly answer my questions through your famous weekly. Will close with three cheers for F. M., F. T. and P. D. Thanking you in advance, I remain,

William Matthews.

(1) Inch more chest expansion wanted. (2) Good. (3) Five miles from Bradford.

Racine, Wis., Sept. 20, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all of your weeklies up to date. I find them the best reading which I ever came across. (1) Does Frank Manley take visitors into his clubhouse? (2) What nationality is Frank? (3) What State is Woodstock in? Hoping to see this in print, I remain,

Hans Muff.

(1) Only on special occasions. (2) American. (3) State of Good Health.

Chicago, Ill., Sept. 19, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having read Frank Manley's Weekly for some time, I would like to have you answer a few questions. I am 16 years 9 months old, weight 155 pounds, height 5 feet 11, ankles 10 inches, calves 14 inches, waist 29 inches, biceps 13 inches, neck 16 inches, reach 71 inches, chest normal 31 inches, chest expanded 34 inches, right thigh 23 inches, left thigh 22 inches. I can lift a 100-pound dumbbell easily, and can muscle a 35-pound weight. I punch the bag and box. After exercising to an extent where I perspire profusely I get a headache. (1) How can I get rid of this? (2) How are my measurements for my age? (3) Is my waist too large; if so, how can I reduce it? (4) How can I reduce my weight to about 140 pounds. (5) Do large bones denote what class of athletics one is best fitted for? I have large ones myself.

A. J. D.

(1) Probably the headache comes from too heavy work, besides which you run risk of becoming muscle-bound. (2) You are powerful, but should go in for less heavy work and much more light work. You have been lured into heavy work, which will spoil you as an athlete long before you are thirty. (3) No. (4) You don't need to reduce weight; it would weaken you. (5) No; the best indication is success in a certain kind of athletics.

Newark, N. J., Sept. 18, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read your weekly from No. 1 to 32, and think it is the best ever published for boys. I will take the liberty of sending my measurements: Age 14 years 8 months, height 5 feet 1 inch, weight 94 pounds, neck 11¼ inches, chest normal 29¼ inches, chest expanded 31½ inches, waist 27¼ inches, thigh 16½ inches, calf 12 inches, ankles 9 inches, biceps 9½ inches, hips 21 inches, wrist 6½ inches. How are my measurements, and where are my weak points? I work in a shop in the daytime, and do you think it would be good to go in the Y. M. C. A. at nights? Is it good to swim and run and do other such things at night?

I remain,

C. K. F.

Your measurements are all a little under, except your waistline, which is much too large. Chest expansion not enough; work for that especially. Biceps are large enough. By all means join the Y. M. C. A. Exercise at night is vastly better than none at all. If you join the Y. M. C. A., tell the physical director there that you want improvements at all points and that you are willing to work for it.

Elm, N. J., September 16, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Just before the Fourth of July I was in a town about 5 miles distance from here when I stopped into a book store and bought the Young Athlete's Weekly, No. 23. I read it and became immediately interested in it and have bought every copy since and intend to do so in the future if possible, although I have to go 5 miles after it. Since reading that first copy I have stopped

drinking tea and coffee and all beverages at meals. I drink water according to your directions. I also chew my food slowly and am trying to eat the proper kind of foods also. I have got a punching bag, boxing gloves, and dumbbells, and I exercise on these every day besides working 10 hours. I also take the breathing exercise of 30 deep breaths four times a day; go to bed about 9 o'clock and get up between 5 and 6. Here are my measurements. I am 16 years 2 months old; weigh 127½ pounds; height, 5 feet 9½ inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; chest, expanded, 34½ inches; shoulders 16 inches; waist, 29 inches; biceps 10 inches; neck, 14 inches; wrist, 6¾ inches. These measurements were taken when I was stripped. I am a baseball player. I play short-stop. I made one error in eleven games—that one with a wet ball. I was second best batter in the club I played with (The Aneora Stars; won, 10; lost, 1). (1) How is this? (2) How are my measurements? (3) What are my defects and how can I remedy them? (4) Why is it every time I undertake to swim I get sick a day after? (5) Do you think I can make a first-class athlete according to my measurements? (6) What athletics do you think I can do best? Thanking you in advance and hoping to see it in print soon, I remain,

Yours truly,

Elmer A. Priestly.

(1) Your work at baseball excellent. (2) You are about 20 pounds under weight, but this is partly on account of being so tall at your age. Another inch of chest expansion needed. (3) Answered. (4) Probably because you stay in too long, and try to swim too much. Swimming is a severe tax on the heart when carried to excess. Even at West Point a cadet qualifies in swimming when he has swum for 15 minutes consecutively. (5) Yes. (6) Why not try running and jumping?

New York, September 19, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I am a reader and admirer of the Frank Manley Weekly, and think it is the king of them all. Seeing that you answer questions on physical training, I take the liberty to ask you a few. I am 14 years of age, height 5 feet 2 inches, weigh 110 pounds, chest normal 30 inches, expanded 33 inches, neck 12 inches, across shoulders 17 inches, wrist 6 inches, waist 29 inches. What are my weak points and how can I improve them? What size dumbbells should I use? How many times am I supposed to chin the bar? Thanking you in advance, I remain, a would-be athlete.

Jacko Simple.

Neck small, waist four and a half inches too large; other measurements good. Use two-pound dumbbells. A healthy boy should be able to chin ten times at the outset, gradually increasing the number.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a constant reader of your magnificent book, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. My measurements are as follows: I am 15 years old, weight 126 pounds, height 5 feet 5½ inches, chest normal 31 inches, chest expanded 33 inches, chest contracted 30 inches, neck 13½ inches, across shoulders 18 inches, calves, 13 inches; wrists, 6½ inches; right forearm, 10½ inches; left forearm, 9½ inches, and waist, 29½ inches. When I take a deep breath a sharp pain flies through my chest. (1) What causes this and how can I remedy it? (2) Will you please tell me the defects? (3) How can I remedy them? I exercise once a week on the flying rings. (4) Is this enough exercise to take on the rings or should I take more and how much? (5) What pound dumbbells should I use? (6) Are eggs good for the diet of an athlete. I carry papers in the morning and hence I can not eat breakfast early in the morning. (7) Is this injurious or not? (8) How many times should I be able to chin myself on the rings? Thanking you in advance, I am, yours to command,

"Athlete."

(1) Caused, undoubtedly, by weakness of chest muscles. (2) Too little chest expansion. (3) Read Talks 44 and 45. (4) You should have at least an hour of gymnastics every day, and an hour of outdoor exercise is the least that you should take. (5) Two pounds. (6) I use eggs very seldom. (7) No; it is better to have plenty of exercise before breakfasting. (8) Ten times, gradually increasing the number.

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